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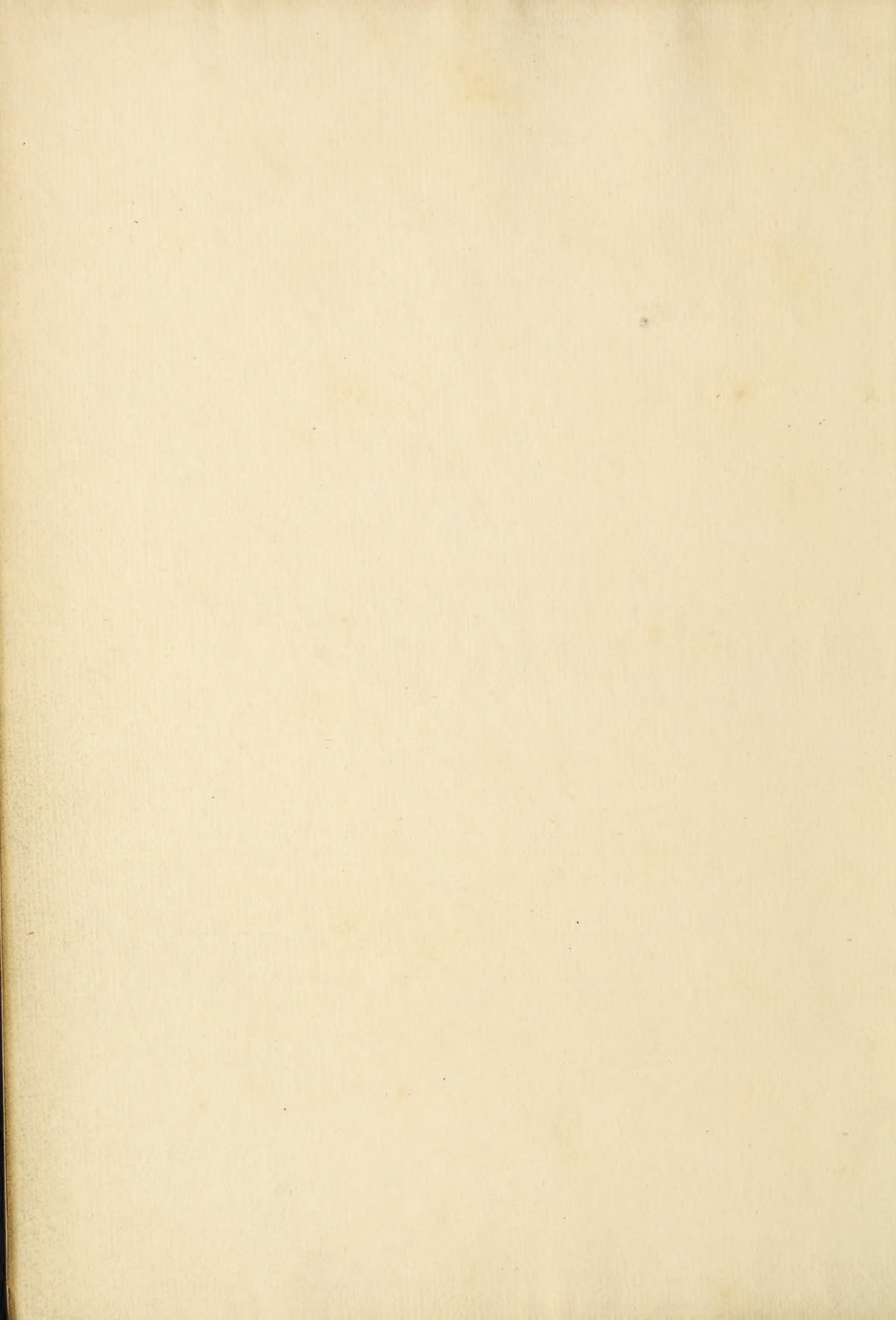
The following leaves have been added. Binding to

- a 1+2 in facsimile
 a 8 original leaf
 d 1 " "
 e 4 " "
 F 3 " "
 F 6 " "
 I 8 in facsimile
 K 1 to 6 " (K₆ blank extension)
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- I, facsimile

This copy is in the original state quite unmarked
 & crisp. A few leaves have been sized only.



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Rete thankes laude and honoure oughe to be ye
 g Byn vnto the clerkes poetes and historiagraphis
 that haue writen many noble bokes of wisdom
 of the kynges passions and miracles of holy seyn
 tes of histories of noble and famous actes & faittes. And
 of the cronicles sithen the begynnynge of the creacion of
 the worlde vnto this present tyme. By whiche we ben dai
 ly enfourmed and haue knowlege of manye thynges. of
 whom we shuld nat haue knowen yf they had nat left to
 vs theire monimentes writen. Among whom and ine
 special to fore alle othez we oughe to gyue a singuler lau
 de vnto that noble and gret philosopher Geffrey chaucer
 the whiche for his ornate writing in oure tonge may wel
 haue the name of a laurate poete. For to fore that he by
 his labour enberisshid ornated and made faire our engli
 she in this Realme was hadde rude speche & incongru as
 yet it apperithe by olde bokes. whiche at this daie oughe
 nat to haue place ne be compared among his beauteous
 volumes & ornate writings. Of whom he made many a
 noble historye as wele in metre as in ryme and prose and
 theym so craftely made that he comprehended his maters.
 in short quiche and high sentences eschewing prolixite &
 casting away the chaf and superfluite & shewing the py
 hed grayne of sentence stered by crafty & sugred eloquen
 ce. Of whom I among alle othez of his bokes the boke of
 the tales of Canterburie in whiche ben many a noble hi
 storie of wisdom policie mirth and gentilnes. And also
 of vertue and holynes. whiche boke diligenly our sen &
 duely examined by the pollitike reason and our sight. of
 my worshipful master William Cayton accordinge to the
 entent and effecte of the seid Geffrey Chaucer and by a
 copy of the seid master Cayton purpos to imprent. By ye
 grace ayde and suppozte of almighty god. whom I hums

Prohmye

hly beseeche. that he of his grete and habundant grace wil
so dispose that I may it fynisse to his plesure laude and
gloze. And that alle we that shalle therein se or rede may
so take & vnderstonde the gode and vertuouse tales that it
may so profite to the helth of oure soules. and in especial
of the soule of the seid Geffrey chaucer first antour & ma
rez of this for seid boke. that after this short and transi
torie lyfe we may come to the euirlasting lyf in heuynne
Amen.

By Richard Pynson.

Justiah H. Benton Ed.
Oct. 17, 1941
5

xxQ. 404.32

Prologue

Whan that Aprille with his showres sote
The droughte of marche hath perfed the rote
And bathed euery beyne in suche licoure
Of whiche vertue engendred is the floure

Whanne zepharus eke with his sote brethe
Enspired hath in euery holtz and hette
The tendre croppes and the yong sonne
Hathe in the ram half his cours yronne
And smale foules make melodye

That slepyh al nyght with open eye
So prieth theym nature in their corages
Than longyn folke to goon on pyramages
And palmers to seche straunte strondes
To serue hawkes couthe in sondry londes
And specialy fro euery shypres ende

Of englund to Caunterburpe they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That theym hath holpyh when they wer seke
ysel in that season on a day

B In suthwerke at the taberde as I lay
Kedy to wenden on my pylgrymage

To caunterburpe with deuoute corage

That nyght came into that hostelrye

wele nyne and twenty in a company

Of sondry folk by auenture yfalle

In felausship and pilgrymes were they alle

That toward caunterbury wolden ryde

The chambrys and the stables were wyde

And wele were we eased at the best

And shortly when the sonne was at rest

Sohadde I spoken with theym euirichone

That I was of their felausship anone

And made forwarde erly for to ryse

Prologue

To take oure wey there as I you deuyse
But neuertheles whyles I haue tyme and space
Or that I ferther in this tale pace
He thinketh it accordant to reason
To telle you al the condicion
Of eche of theym so as it semed me
And whiche they were and of what degre
And in what aray eke they weren yne
And at a knyght thenne I wille begynne



a knyght there was a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he first began
To ride oute, he loued cheualrye
Trowth and honoure freedom and curtesye
ful worthy he was in his lordes werre
And therto hadde he ryden no man ferre
And as wele in cristendome as in hethnesse
And euir hadde honoure for his worthynesse
At alisaundre he was when it was wonne

J. Hunt
Gregory
1795

Fulle ofte tyme he hadde the borde begonne
 Abouen alle nations in price
 In letto we hadde he reysed and in Ruse
 In garnade at the sette eke hadde he be
 At algeyir and ryden in Belmarpe
 At lepeys was he and eke at Satalpe
 Whan they were wonne and in the grete see
 At many a noble arme hadde he be
 In mortayl bataillies hadde he be systene
 And foughe for oure feyth at Trampssene
 In listes thryes and ay sleyn his foo
 This ylike worthy knyght hadde he also
 Som tyme with the lorde of palathye
 Ageyn a nother hethen man in Turkye
 And euirmore he hadde a souerayn price
 And though he was worthy he was wise
 And of his spozte as meke as a mayde
 He neuiz yete no vilanye he said
 In alle his lyf vnto no maner wight
 He was a very gentyl parfite knyght
 For to telle you of his arzaie
 His horse were gode but he was nat gaye
 Of fustian he were a gyppon
 Alle he smered with his habergeon
 For he was late come fro his byage
 And sent for to do his pilgramage



Wyth him there was his sonne a yong squyer
 Alouer and a lusty bacheler.
 With lokes crulle as they were leyde in presse
 Of twenty yere of age he was y gesse
 Of his stature he was of euene length
 And wonderly deluyez and of grete strenght
 And he hadde be som tyme in cheuanchye
 In flaundes. in Artoyse and in pycardye
 And bozne him wele as of a bytre space
 In hope to stonden in his ladies grace
 Embrowded was he as it were a mede
 Allie fulle of freshe floures white and rede
 Syngintge he was or slopyntge alle the daie
 He was as freshe as is the moneth of may
 Short was his golwe with fluyes long and wyde
 Wele coude he sitte on hors and therto faire ryde
 He coude songes make and wele endite
 Iouste and daunce portraye and eke write

So hote he loued that by nyghter tafe
 He slepte nomore than the nyghtingale
 Curteys he was lowly and serupsable
 He carft he forne his fadre at the table



a yeman hadde he and seruauntes nomo
 At that tyme for he list to ryde soo
 And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene
 A sheef of pecok a rowes bright and shene
 Vndre his belt he bare ful thristely
 Wele coude he dresse his takyl yomanly
 His arowes drouped nat with fethers lowe
 And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe
 A not hede he hadde with a broune visage
 Of wodemannes craft coude he alle the vsage
 Vpon his arme he bare a gay bracez
 And by his syde a suerde and a bokelez
 And on that othez side a gay daggez
 Harnesed wele and sharp as poynte of spere

A cristofer on his brest of siluer shene
 An horne he baaz the ba wdryk was of grene
 A foster was he sothly as I gesse



Her was also a nonne a pricr: sse
 That of her synking was synple and hoy
 Her gretest othe was by saint loy
 And she was clepyd dame Egentyn
 Full wele she songe the seruice dyuine
 Entoynd in her boye fulle semely
 And frenche she spake fulle fetously
 After the scle of stratford at the bowe
 For frenshe of Parice was to her vnknowe
 At mete wele taught was she with alle
 She lete no morsel fro her lippes fallie
 Ne wette her fynghers in her sauce depe
 Wele coude she carpe a morselle of mete
 That nodrope fel vpon her brest

Prologue

In curteyse was sette fulle mehyl her lest
Her ouerlippe wiped she so clene
That in her cuppe ther was no ferthing sene
Of grece. Whan she hadde dronke her draught
Fulle semely after her mete she raught
And sekily she was of grete disporte
Of plesaunce and ampyable of porte
And peyned her to countrefete there
Of courte and to be stately of manere
And to be holde digne of reuerence
But for to speke of her conscience
She was so cheritable and so pyteous
She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mouse
Raught in trappe if it were dede or bledde
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
With roost fleshe or mylke or wastel brede
But sore wept she if any of theym were dede
Or if men smote theym with yerde smert
And alle was conscience and tendre herte
Fulle semely her wympy lpyched was
Her nose tretise her eyen grey as glas
Her mouth smal and therto soft and rede
But spherly she hadde a faire forehede
It was almost a spanne brode & trowe
For hardly she was nat vnder growe
Fulle fetyce was her cloke as I was waaz
Of smalle coralle aboute her arme she bare
A peyre of bedes . gauded alle with grene
And there on heng a broche fulle shene
On whiche first was writte a crowned A
And after that Amor vincit omnia
A nother nonne with her hath she
That was her chapeleyn and prests thre



A Monke ther was fayr for the maistre
 An oute ryder that loued were benoyre
 A manly man to be an abbote able
 Fulle many a deynthe horse hadde he in stable
 And when he rode men myght his bridel here
 Gyngling and whispyng in the winde clere
 And eke as lowde as doth the chapel belle
 There as this lord was he par of the cille
 Of the reule of seint Maure and of seint Benet
 Because he held it somwhat olde and strepte
 This ilke monke lete olde thinges pace
 And helde after the new worlde the space
 He gaf nat of the texte a pulled henne
 That seyth that hunters be nat holy men
 Ne that a monke when he is rechelesse
 Is lyke to a fische when it is waterlesse
 This is to sey a monke oute of a cloystre

Prologne

But that tēte helde he nat worthlan oyste
And I sey that his opunyon was gode
What schulde he studye and make him wode
Upon a boke alwey in cloystre to poure
Or swynke with his hondes and labour
As austyn hiddeth how schulde the worlde be serued
Let austyn haue his swynke to him reserved
Therefore he was a prycafour a right
Greshoundes he hadde as swift as foule on flight
Of pryking and of huntynge for the hare
Was alle his lust for no cost wolde he spare
I sawe his sleues purfryed at the honde
With grice and that the fynest of a londe
And to fasten his hode vndre the chynne
He hadde of golde wrought a curyous pynne
A loue knotte in the gretter ende ther was
His hede was halled which shone as glas
And eke his face as he hadde been anoynte
He was a lorde fatte and in gode poynte
His eyen steep and rolling in his hede
That stempd as a furneyns of a lede
His botes sowple his hors in grette estate
Nowe certeynly he was a fayre pricate
He was nat pale as a foureynded goost
A fat swan loued he best of any roste
His palfrey was as broune as a bery



Frere ther was a wanton and a merey
 A limytoure and a ful solemne man
 In alle the ordres foure is none that can
 Somoche of dalpaunce and faire langage
 He hadde made fulle many a faire mariage
 Of yong wymmen at his owen cost
 Vnto his ordre he was a noble post
 Fulle welbeloued and fulle famplier was he
 With frankleyns ouer al in his contre
 And eke with worthy yemen of the towne
 For he hadde powez of confessioun
 And seid him self more than a curate
 And of his ordre he was licenciat
 Fulle suetely herd he confession
 And plesaunt with his absolucion
 And an easy man to gyue penaunce
 There he wiste to haue gode pitaunce

Prologue

Foz vnto a poure ordure foz to gyue
Is signe that a man is wele y shryue
Foz if he yaf he durst wele make a baunt
He wist that a man was repentaunt
Many a man so hard is of herte
He may nat wepe though he soze smerte
Therfore in stede of wepyng and prayes
Men moste yeue siluez to the poure freres
His tepat was y farsed ful of knyues
And with pynnes to gyue faire wyues
And certeyne he hadde a mery note
Merely colde he syng and pley at the rote
Of yeddinges he bare vtterly the price
His necke was white as the floure delice
Therto stronge he was as a champpoun
And knewe the tauernes wele in euery towne
And euery osteler and tapstere
Better than a lazare or a beggestere
Foz vnto suche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nat as by his faculte
To haue of suche seke lazars acqeyntaunce
It is nat honest it may nat auarunce
Foz to dele with suche poraille
But with riche and sellers of bytaille
And ouer alle there as richesse shulde aryse
Curteys he was and lowly of seruite
Ther was no man no where so vertuous
He was the best beggar in his house
And yaued a certeyne ferme for the graunt
Noon of his Brethern cam in his haunt
Foz though a widowe hadde nat a shoo
So pleisant was his in principio
yet wolde he haue a ferthing or he went

Prologue

His purchase was better than his rent
And berke he coude as it were a whelpe
In loue daies there coude he mekel helpe
For there he nas lyke a cloystrez
With a thredebare iope as a poure frere
But he was lyke a maister or a pope
Of double worstede was his semy cope
That rounde was as a belle oute of presse
Som what he lisped for his wantownesse
To make his englisse swete vpon his tonge
And his harpyng when he hadde y sung
His eyen t wenkled in his hede a right
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght
This worthy frere was called huberd



Marchant ther was with a forked berd
In motley on his horse high he sat
Vpon his hede a flaundes beuer hat

Prologue

His botes claspid feyre and fetously
His reasons he spack ful solemnyly
Shewing alwey the encesse of his Wynnyng
He wolde the see were kepte for any thinge
Betwyte Middelburgh and ore Welle
Wele cowde he in his eschaunge selle
This worthy man his witte ful wele besette
Ther wist no wight that he was in dette
So estatly he was of gouernaunce
With his bartaynes and with his cheuesaunce
Forsothe he was a worthy man with alle
But sothe to say I not how men him calle



a
Clerke ther was of Deynforde also
That vnto logik had longe y go
And lene was his horse as a rake
And he was nat right fat I vndertake
But looked helowe and therto sobirly
Ful thredebare was his ouerest courtly

Clerke of Deynforde

Prologue

For he hadde gotten him yet no benefice
He was nat wordly to haue an office
Nor he hadde leuyr to haue at his beddis hede
A wenty bokis clad in white and rede
Of ariouile and of his philosophie
Of chan robes riue or fedyl or sawtre
But alie be that he was a philosophre
Yet hadde he but lytel golde in cofre
But alie that he might of his friendes hent
On bokes and on lernyng he it spent
And he silygan for the soules praye
Of theym that yaued him wherwith to scolaye
Of stoupe toke he moost cure and hede
Nat a worde spake he more than nede
And that was seyde in fourme and reuerence
Shorte and quike and ful of high sentence
Sownyng morai bertue was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche



Prologue

a Sertheaunt of la we waaz and wise
Was there that oft hadde be at the paruise
That was also fulle riche of excellence
Discrete he was and of grete reuerence
He semyd suche his wordes were so wise
Justice he was ful ofte in assise
By patent and by playn comyssion
For his science and his high renoun
Of fees and robes had he many one
So grete a purchasour was there nowhere none
Al was fee symple to him in effecte
His purchace myght nat be to him suspecte
Nowhere so besy a man as he ther nas
And yet he semed besyer than he was
In termes had he caas and domes alle
That fro the tyme of king William were falle
Therto he coude endite and make a thing
Ther coude no wight pynche at his writing
And every statute coude he pleye by rote
He rode but homely in a myddel cote
y girthed with a seynt of silke with barres smale
Of his aray telle I no lenger tale



Prologue

Frankleyn Was in his companye
White Was his herd as is the deysie
And of his complexioun Was sanguyn
Wele loued he by the morowe a cuppe of Wyn
Tolpue in delite Was euez his wone
For he Was eppuries owen sone
That held opunyon that playn delite
Was berzay felicite parsite
An house holder and that a grete Was he
Seint Julian he Was in his contre
His brede his ale Was at wey after one
A better Wiued man Was no where none
Withoute bake mete Was he neuiz in house
His fische his flesshe and that so plenteuous
It snewed in his house of mete and drinke
Of alle denteres that men coude thinke
After the sondry season of the yere
So chaunged he his mete and his soupere
Fulle many a fatte partriche hadde he in me We
And many a breme and luce in ste We
Woo Was his coke but his sawce Were
Popnaunt and sharp and redy alle his gere
His table dormaunt in his halke at wey
Was redy couered alle the long dape
At sessions thez Was he lord and sire
Fulle oft tyme he Was knyght of the shire
A anlace and a gypser al of silke
King at his Girdel as white as morowe mylke
A shereue hadde he he and coronoure
Was nowhere suche a worthy hauesoure

Prologue



a N haberdassher thez was and' a carpentere
 A webbe a dpez and a tapyser
 And they were clothed alle in one byuere
Of a solempne and grete fraternyte
fulle fresshe and new theiz gere pyked was
Theire knyves chaped were nat with brasse
But al with siluez wrought fulle clene and wele
Theiz girdeles and their pouches every dyle
wele semed eche of theym a faire burtees
To sitten in the yelde halle at the dese
Eueriche for the wisdom that he can
was happely for to be an alderman
for catel hadde they ynow and rent
And theiz wyues wolde it wele assent
And elles certeyn they were to blame
It is fulle faire to be called Madame
And go to the bigylls alle bifoze
And haue a mantel rially y boze

Prologue



a
Toke they hadde with theym for the nones
To boyle the cheyns and the mary bones
And poudre marchaunt tart and galingale
Wele knewe he a draught of london ale
He coude roost sethe broyle and frye
Make mortrewes and wele bake a pye
But grete harme was it as it thought me
For on his shynne a mormale hadde he
And blanke manger made he with the beste

Prologue



Shipman was there that woned far by West
a for ought I wote he was of dertmouth
He rode vpon a rownce as he couth

In a golwne folding to the knee
A dagger on a lace hanging hadde he
A boute his necke vndre his arme a dolwne
The hote somer hadde made his hewe alle browne
And certeynly he was a gode felawe
Fulle many a draught of wyne he hadde draue
Fro burdeuy warde while the chapman slepe
Of nyce conscience toke he no kepe
If that he faught and hadde the higher honde
By water he sent theym home to euerylonde
But of his craft to reken wele his tydes
His stremes and his daungers him besides
His herberugh his mone and his lodemanage
There was none suche from hulle to Cartage
Hardy he was and waaz to vndertake
With many a tempest his bezde hath been shake

Prologue

He knew alle the hauenes that there were
From Godelond unto Capfenestre
And euery cryke in Britayn and in Spayne
His barge was called the Maudeleyne



With vs ther was a doctoure of phisyke
In the worlde was ther none him lyke
To speke of phisyke and surgery
For he was grounde in astronomye
He kept his pacient a grete dele
In houres by manye naturelle
Wele coude he of fortune the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient
He knewe the cause of euery maladye
Were it of colde hete moyst or drye
And were engendred of what humoure
He was a very parsite practesoure
The cause yknowe and of his harme the rote
Anone he yaf to the seke man his bote
For redy alwey be his apotecaries

Prologue

To send him drugges and his lectuaries
For eche of theym made othez for to wyne
Theire frendeship was nat new to begynne
Ful wele knewe he the olde Esculapius
And discorydes and eke Rufus
Olde pocras. haly. and eke Galiene
Serapion. Rasis. and eke Auicene
Auerroys damascene and constantyn
Bernarde Gatisden and Gilbertyn
Of his dyete mesurable was he
For it was of no superfluite
But of grete norpsshing and degestyble
His stodye was but lytel on the byble
In sangweyn and in perce y cladde with alie
Lyned with taffata and with sand alle
And lytel he was of his dispence
He kept that he wan in the pestiẽce
For golde in physike is a cordialle
Therefore he loued golde in especalle



Prologue

a
Gode wif thez was of besyde bathe
And she was some dele deaf & that was scathe
Of clothe making hadde she suche an haunt
She passed theym of ypre and of gaunt
In alie the parisse wif was there none
That to the offryngte bifore her schulde gone
And if thez dyd certeyn brothe was she
Than was she oute o falle charyte
Her hercheues were fulle fyne of grounde
I durst swere they weyd thre pounce
That on sonday were on her hede
Her hosen were of fyne scarlet rede
Ful streyte y teyde and shoos ful moyst and new
Bolde was her face faire and rede of hewe
She was a worthy woman alle her lyue
Husbondes at the chirche doze hadde she fyue
Withoute othez company in youthe
But therof nedith nat to speke as nowthe
At acres hadde she been and at Iherusalem
She had passed through many a straunge reame
At Roine she hadde be and boloyne
At seynt James in Galis and at Coloyne
She coude moche of wandring in the wey
Cap tothed was she sothly to sey
Upon an ambulez ful easly she satte
y wyped wele and on her hede an hatte
As brode as it were a bokeler or a targe
A fote mantel aboute her hippes larte
And on her heles a petre of spores sharpe
In felawship coude she la wbe and carpe
Of remedies of loue she coude par chaunce
For of that arte she coude the olde daunce



Gode man thez was of religioun
 a And was a poure parson of a towne
 But riche he was of holy thought and werke
 He was also a lerned man a clerke
 That cristes gospelles truly wolde preche
 His parissbons deuoutly wolde he teche
 Benyghtne he was and wondre diligent
 And in aduersite fulle pacient
 And suche he was proued ofte sithes
 Fulle lothe were he to curse for his tithes
 But rather wolde he yeue oute of doute
 Vnto his poure parissbons aboute
 Of his offrpynte and eke of his substaunce
 He cowde in lytel thinge haue suffisaunce
 Wyde was his parysshe and houses fer a sondre
 But he lete nat for rayne ne for thundre
 In sekenesse nez in myscheyf to bisite
 The ferrest in his parysshe more and lyte
 Vpon his feete and in his honde a staf

Prologue

This noble ensample bnto his shepe he paue
That first he wrought and afterwarde he taught
Dute of the gospelle the wordes he caught
And this figure he eked therto
That if golde rust what shulde iron doo
Foz a preest to be foule in whom we truste
No wondre is a lewde man to ruste
And shame it is if a preest take kepe
A stotty shepeherd and a cle ne shepe
Wele oughit a preest ensample to gyue
By his ciencesse how his shepe shold tyue
Besette nat his benefice to hyre
And lete his shepe a combre in the myre
And ryne to london to seynt poules
And se he him a chauntrye for soules
O thez with a broderhode to be withholde
But duelle at home and kepe his folde
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarpe
He was a shepeherde and nat a mercenarype
And though he holy were and vertuouse
He was nat to synfulmen to dispitouse
Ne of his teching daunterous ne digne
But in his speche discrete and benigne
To drawe folke to he wyth fairnesse
By gode ensamyle that was his besynesse
But it were any parson obstynate
Whether he were of high or lowe estate
Him wolde he synbbe sharpeky for the nones
A better preest I trowe nowhere none is
He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence
Ne made to him a spyped conscience
But cristes loze and his apostles tuelue
He taught but first he folowed him selue

Prologne



W
Wth him ther was a ple we man his Brodez
That hadde led of duntg many a fother
A trew swynker and a gode was he
Leuyng in pease and parfite charite
God loued he best with alle his hert
At alle tymes thouth he gamed or smert
And than his nyghboure right as him selue
He wolde thresshe and therto digge and delue
For cristes sake for euery poure wight
Withoute hyre if it ley in his myght
His tythes paide he faire and wele
Of his proper swynke and his catele
In a taberd he rode vpon a mere
There was also a reue and eke a millere
A sompnour and a pardonere also
A manciple and my selue there was no moo



The mylier was a stoute carle for the nones
 fulle byt he was of braun and bones
 That proued wele for ouer alle there he cam
 At wrastling alwey he wolde haue the ram
 He was short shuldred brode a thicke quarre
 There was no doze that he nolde heue of the barre
 Or breke it at rennyngte with his hede
 His berd as any sowe or foy was rede
 And therto brode as it were a spade
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hadde
 A werte, and there on stode a tufte of heres
 Rede as the brusteles of a sowes eres
 His nosetrikes blake were and wide
 A swerde and a bokelez bare he by his side
 His mouth as grete was as a furney
 He was a Jangler and a goliardys
 And that was moost of synne and harlotrys
 Wele coude he stepe corne and tolle thrys
 And that he hadde a thombe of golde parde

Prologu

A white cote and a blew hode wered he
A bagge pype coude he blowe and sowne
And therwith he brought vs oute of towne



a Gentyll manciple Was ther of the temple
Of whiche a catoure myght take exemple
For to be wise in byyng of vitaille
For whether he paid or toke by taille
Algate he waited so on his achate
That he was ay bifoze and in gode state
Nowe is nat that of god a faire grace
That suche a lewed mannes witte shalke pace
The wisdom of an hepe of lernyd men
Of maisters hadde he mo thanne thric s ten
That were of laue experte and coziours
Of whiche there were a dosen in that house
Worthy to be stewardes of rent and sonde
Of any lord that is in Englonde
To make him lyue by his owen good
In honoure dettes but he were wode

Prologue

Otherlyue scarsely as theym liste desire
And able for to helpe alle the shire
In any cause that might falle oz happe
And yet this manciple set alie theiz cappe



¶ There was a slendre colerike man
His herde is shawe as nygh as he can
His heres were by his eres rounde y shore
His top was doched like a prest bifore
Fulle leng were his legges and fulle lene
By the staf ther is no calf y sene
Wele coude he kepe a garnez and a bynne
Ther was none auditoure coude of him wyne
Wele wist he by the drought and by the rayn
The yelding of his sede and of his greyn
His lordes shepe his nete and his depre
His swyne his horse his store and his pultre
Was hely in this reups gouernynge
And by his couenaunt paue the rehnyng

Prolog

Sith his lorde was twenty yere of age
Ther coude no man bringe him in a ratte
There nas baillie ne none other hyne
That he ne knewe his slight of his coupre
They were of him a drad as of the deth
His wonyng was ful faire upon a heth
With grene trees shadowed was his place
He coude better than his lorde purchase
Fulliche riche he was astored pryuelly
His lord wele coude he please substelly
To yeue and lene to him of his own good
And haue thanke and yete a cote and a hode
In youth he hadde lernyd a good mystere
He was a were gode wright a Carpenterere
This reue sat upon a wele gode stot
That was a spomek grey and hight scot
A long furcote of perce upon him he hadde
And by his side he bare a rusty bladde
Of norfoke was this reue of which I telle
Beside a towne men calle Blads wellle
Tucked he was as is a frere aboute
And euir he rode the hyndrest of the route



Prologue

Somnoure With vs Was in that place
That hadde a fyre rede cherubyns face
Foz sasseme he was with eyen narrow
Hote he was and likerous as a sparow
With blak browes skalled and pilled berd
Of his bisage children were a ferd
Ther nas quyk siluez litarge ne brymstone
Borace ceruse ne oyle of tartre none
Ne oynement that wolde clense ne bite
That him might helpe of his welkes white
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes
Wekelouid he oynons garleke and lekes
And foz to drinke strong wyne as rede as blode
Than wolde he speke and cry as he were wood
And when he hadde wele dronke the wyne
Than wolde he speke no worde but latyn
A fewe termes hadde he two or thre
That he hadde lernyd of sum man of decre
No wondre is he herde it alle the daye
And eke ye knowe wele that a jay
Can clepe watte as wele as can the pope
But who coude him in othir thinges trope
Than hadde he spent alle his philopfyne
Ay questio quid queris wolde he cry
He was a gentyll harlote and kynde
A better felaw sholde men nat fynde
He wolde suffre foz a quarte of wyne
A gode felowe to haue his concubyn
A twelf moneth and excuse him at the fulle
Fulle pryuelly a fynche eke coude he pulle
And if he fonde owhere a good felawe
He wolde teche him anone to haue a we
In suche caas of the archedebyns curse

Prologue

But if mannes soule were in his purse
For in his purse he sholde punysshed be
Purse is the archdekenes helle saide he
But wele I woote he lied right in dede
Of cursyngt ought eche man to drede
For cursyngt wille sle right as soyling saueth
And also ware him of a significait
In daunger hadde he at his own guyse
Alle the yongt tyrles of the diocyse
And knewe of theire counseyll and was of theire rede
A garlonde he hadde sette vpon his hede
As grete as it were an ale stake
A bokelez hadde he made him of a cake



With theym there rode a gentil pardone,
Of rounquale his frende and his compere
That streight was come fro the courte of Rome
Fulle lowde he songt come hyther soue to me
This sompnoure bare to him a styf burdoun
Was neuiz trompe of half so grete a sowne

Prologue

This pardoner had here as yelow as wey
And smoth it heng as doth a stryke of fley
By hounses heng his lockes that he hadde
And therwith his shulders ouer spradde
But than it ley by curpons one and oon
An hode for joynte wered he none
For it was trussed vpon his walette
Him thought he rode vpon a new get
Disseyntid saue his cappe he rode alle bare
Suche grayng eyen had he as hath the an hare
A bernacie hadde he sowed vpon his cappe
His walet biforne him hadde he in his lappe
Brette fulle of pardon come fro Rome alle hote
A boyce he hadde as smaile as hath a gote
No herde hadde he ne neuiz shuld haue
As smothe was it as it were new shaye
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare
But of his craft from Berwyke vnto Ware
Ne was ther nowhere suche a pardoner
For in his male he hadde a pylowe beer
Which that he seid was oure ladyes beyle
He said he hadde a gobbet of the seyle
That seynt Petyr hadde whan that he went
Vpon the see tyl Iesus crist him hent
He hadde a crosse of laton fulle of stones
And in a glasse he hadde pigges bones
But with these reliques whan that he fonde
A poure parson duelling vpon londe
Vpon a daye he gat him more money
Than the parson gat in monethes twey
And thus hadde he flateries and tapes
He made the parson and the peple his apes
But truly to telle at the last

Prologue

He was in chirche a noble eccle siaste
Wele cowde he rede a lesson or a stozpe
But alther best he songe an offre tozpe
Foz wele he wist whan that songe was sunge
He must preche and fyle a while his tunge
To wynne siluez as he fulle wile coude
Therfore he songe the merierly and loude

n Dw haue I tolde you shortely in a clause
 The state the arzaie the nombre & the cause
 Why that assembled was this company

In Southwerke at the gentil hosterpe
That hight the Taberde fast by the belle
But now is tyme to you for to telle
How that we bare vs that ilke nyght
When that we were in the hostry a night
And after wille I telle of oure viage
And alle the remenaunt of oure pilgramage
But first I you pray of your curtesye
That ye arette nat my vilonye
Though that I playnly speke in this matere
To telle you thez wordes and theire chere
And though I speke theire wordes propriely
Foz this ye knowe as wele as I
Who shal a tale telle after a man
He must reherse as nere as he can
Euery worde if it be in his charge
Al speke he neuiz so rudely and so large
Or elles he must telle his tale bntre we
Or sey thinges or feyne wordes newe
He may nat spare although he were his brodez
He moot as wele say o worde as a nother
Trist spake him selue ful brode in holy writte
And wele ye wote no vilany is it

Prologue

Þe plato seyth who can it rede
The worde must be cosyn to the dede
Also I praye you foryeue it me
Al though I set nat folk in theire degre
Here in these tales as they shulde stonde
My witte is shorte ye may wele vnderstonde



Wete here made oure ost to vs euerichone
And to the soupere sette he vs anone
He seruyd vs with vitaylle at the best
Stronge was the wyne and wele drinke vs lyst
A semery man oure ost was with alle
For to be a marshalle in a lordes halke
A large man he was with eyen stepe
A feyrez brugges is ther none in chepe
Welde of his speche and wele was y taught
And of manhode lacked he right naught
Þe therto was he right a mery man
And after souper to pley n he began
And spake of mirth amonge othir thinges

Whan that we hadde made oure reknynnges
 He sayd thus lordynnges trully
 ye be to me right welcom hertly
 For by my trewth if I shalle nat lye
 I saw nat this yere so mery a company
 At onys in this herborow as now
 Feyne wolde I do you myrth if I wist how
 And of a myrth I am right now be thought
 To do you ease and it shal cost you nought
 ye go to Taunterbury warde god you spede
 The blissful martyrs quyte you your mede
 And wele ye wote as ye go by the wey
 ye shapyn you to take and to pley
 For trully comfort ne myrth is none
 To ryde by the wey dombe as a stone
 And therfore wille I make you disporte
 As I said erst and do you comforte
 And it lyketh you alle by one assent
 For to stonde at my iugement
 And for to wyrke as I shalle you say
 To morow whan ye ryden on the way
 Now by my fadre soule that is dede
 But ye be mery I shal geue you my hede
 Holde by your hond withoute more speche
 Dure counsel shal nat long be to seche
 As thought it was nat worth to make vs wys
 And graunted him with oute more a bys
 And hadde him sey his berdite as him list
 Lordinges quod he now herkne the best
 But take it nat I praye you in disdeyn
 This is the poynte to speke it shorte and pley
 That eche of you to shorte with your wey
 In this biage shal tel tales t wey

Prologue

To Caunterbury Warde I mene it so
And homwarde he shal teile othez tales two
Of auentures that whilom haue befallē
And whiche of you berith him best of alle
That is to say that tellith in this caas
Tales of the best sentence and moost solace
Shalie haue a souper of our alibez cost
Here in this place sittynge by the post
Whan that we com ayen from Caunterbury
And for to make you the more mery
I wille my selue godely with you ryde
Right at myn owen cost and be your gyde
And who that wol my iugement with say
Shortely shal paye alle that is spent by the wey
And if he bouchsaf that it be so
Tel me anone withente wordes mo
And I wille arly shape me therfore
This thing was graunted and othes swore
With fuy glad herte and preyen him also
That he wolde bouchsaf that it be so
And that he wolde be our gouernour
And of our tales iuge and reportour
And sette a souper at a certeyn pryce
And wolde be ruli d at his deuyce
High and lowe and alle by one assent
We be accorded to this iugement
And ther bpon the wyne was sette anone
We dranke and to rest went we echone
With oute any lenger tariyng
A morowe when the day gan spring
Up rose our hoost and was alle our cok
And gadred vs to gidre alle in a flock
And forth we ryden litel more than paas

Unto the Watering of sent Thomas
 And there our host gan his horse a rest
 And said hekeneth lordinges if ye list
 ye woot oure forwarde and I you recorde
 yf euynsong and morosonge accorde
 Let se now who shal telle the first tale
 As euiz mot I drinke wyne or ale
 Who so wil be rebelle to my iugement
 Shal pay for alle that is by the wey spent
 We draw cut or that ye further twynne
 n Whiche shal the first tale begynne
 Syr knyght quod he my master and my lord
 Now draw with cut for that is myn accorde
 Cometh hether quod he my lady prioressse
 And ye Syr clerke let by your shamefastnes
 Ne studie nat. ley on hand euery man
 Anone to drawen euery wight began
 And shortely to telle as it was
 Were it by auenture fortune or caas
 The sothe is this. the cut fyl on the knyght
 Of whiche fulle blith and glade is euery wight
 And telle he must as it was re son
 By forwarde and by composition
 As ye haue herde what nedith wordes mo
 And whan this godeman sa we that it was so
 As he that was wise and obedient
 To kepe his forwarde by his fre assent
 He saide sithnes I shal begynne the game
 What welcom be cut in goddes name
 Now let vs ryde and herken what I say
 And with that worde we riden furth our wey
 And he began with a right mery chere
 And seydanone his tale as ye shalle here

The knyghtes Tale

Here begynneth the knyghtes tale



Whilom as olde storpes tellith vs
W Ther was a duke hight Theseus
Of Thebes he was lorde and gouernour
And in his tyme suche a conquerour
That greter was ther none vndre the sonne
Fulie many a riche contre hadde he wonne
That with his wisdom and cheualry
He conquered alle the regne of femeny
That whilom was cleped Citha
And wedded the quene ypolitia
And brought her home in his contre
With moche gloupe and solennyte
And eke her yongt sustre Emely
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to athenes ryde
And alle his hoost in harneys him be side
And certes if it nere to longt to here

The knyghtes Tale

I wolde haue tolde fully the matere
How wonne was the regne of sempne
By thesenaus and by his cheualry
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Atheues and amafones
And how besegged was ypolita
The faire hardy quene of Cithea
And of the fest that was at her wedding
And of the tempest at her home comyng
But alle that thyng I moot as now forbere
I haue god wote a large felde to ere
And weke been the oxen in my plow
The remenaunt of my tale is long ynow
I wil nat let eke none of this route
Yet euery felow telle his tale aboute
And let se now who shalle the souper wyne
And there I left I wille ageyn begynne

His duke of whom I make mencion

t Whan he was come almost to the town
In al his welthe and his moost pryde
He was ware as he cast his eye a syde
Where that there knelt in the high wey
A company of ladies twey and twey
Eche after othez cladde in clothes blake
But suche a crye and suche a wo they make
That in this world nys creature lpyng
That herde suche an othez weymenting
And of this cry they nolde neuiz stentyng
Tyl they the reynes of his bridel bentyng
What folke be ye that at myn home comyng
Perturben so my fest with cryng
Quod Theseus. haue ye so grete enuye
Of myn honour that thus compleyn and crye

The knyghtes tale

Or who hath you mysboden or offended
And tel me if it may be amended
And why that ye be clothed thus in blake
The oldest lady of them alle spake
Whan she had swoned with a dedly chere
That it was rewth to se and to here
She sayd lorde to whom fortune hath yeue
Victory. and as a conquerour to lyue
Nought greueth vs your glozy and your honouz
But we beseke you of mercy and socour
Haue mercy on our woo and distresse
Som drope of pite through thy gentilnesse
Upon vs wreched women let now falle
For certes lorde ther is none of vs alle
That she ne hath been duchesse or a quene
Now be we captiffes as it is wile sene
Thanked be fortune and her fais whele
That none estate ensureth to be wile
Now certes lorde to abide your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse clemence
We haue be wayting alle this tourneyght
Now help vs lord such it lieth in thy might
Wreche which that wepe and wayle thus
i Whilom wis to king Campanus
That starft at thebes a cursed be that day
And alle we than bern in this arape
And make alle this lamentacion
We losten alle our husbondes at that toun
Whiles that the sege there aboute lay
And yet now the elde creon wela way
That lord is now of Thebes that cite
Ful filled of Ire and iniquite
He for te spite and for his tiranny

The knyghtes tale

To doon the ded Bodies bilony
Of alle our lordes which that been slawe
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe y drawe
And wol nat suffre theym by none assent
Nether to be buryed ne to be Brent
But makith houndes to ete them in dispite
And with that worde with oute more respite
They fallen groueling and cry piteoussy
Haue on vs wrechid women som mercy
And let our sorow synke in thyn herte
This gentil duke of his counseil stert
With hert pitous whenne he herde them speke
Him thought his hert wolde breke
When he sa we them so pitous and so mate
That whilom were of so grete estate
And in his armes he them alle by hent
And them conforteb in fulle gode entent
And swore his othe as he was trew knyght
He wolde do so ferforth his might
Upon the tyraunt creon him to wreke
That alle the peple of grece shuld speke
How Creon was of theseus y serued
As he that hath his deth wele deserued
And right anone withouten more abode
His baner he displaied and forth he rode
To thebes warde and alle his oost by syde
No neer athenes nolde he go ne ryde
Ne take his ease nat fully half a day
But on his wey that nyght he lay
And sent anone ppolita the quene
And smely her yongt sustre shene
Vnto the toun of athenes to duelle
And forth he rydeth ther is no more to telle

The knyghtes tale

He rede statue of mars With spere and targe
t So shyneth in his white baner large
That alie the feldes glittren vp and doun
And by his baner born is his penon
Of golde fulle riche in which ther was y bete
The mynutaure which he wan in crete
Thus rideth this duke this conquerour
And in his oste of cheualrye the floure
Til that he cam to Thebes and a light
faire in a feld there as he thought to fight
But shortly for to speke of this thing
With creon whiche was of thebes kynng
He faught . and slaw him manly as a knyght
In playn bataille and put his folke to flight
And at a sawte he wan the cite after
And rent a doun Walle sparze and rafter
And to the ladies he restored ageyn
The bodies of thei2 husbondes that wer slayn
To do obseques as tho was the gypse
But it were atte to longe for to deuise
The grete clamour and the weymenting
That the ladies made atte brennyng
Of the bodies . and the grete honour
That Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to the ladies when they from him went
But shortly for to telle is myn entent
When that this worthy duke this Theseus
Hath creon slayne and wan thebes thus
Styl in the felde he toke al nyght his rest
And did with alle the contre as him list
He ransaked in the taas of bodies dede
Theym for to stripe of harneys and of wede
The pylours dyde thei2 besynesse and cure

The knyghtes tale

After the bataylle and the discomfiture
And so besyde that in that caas they fonde
Throw gyrt with many a greuous wounde
Two yong knyghtes lying by and by
Bothe in one harnays wrought fulle richely
Of whiche two Arcite hight that one
And the other knyght hight Palamon
Nat fully quicke ne fully dede they were
But by their cote armure and their gere
The herodes knew them best in specialle
As that they were of the blode ryalle
Of thebes and of Sustryn two y bore
Dute of the taas the pylours haue them toze
And haue them caried soft into the tent
Of the seus, and he fulie sone them sent
To Athenes to dwellle there in pryson
Perpetuelle for he nolde no raunson
And when this worthy duke hadde thus doon
He toke his hoost and home he gothe anone
With laurez crowned as a conqueroure
And there he lyueth in joye and in honoure
Terme of his lyf what nedith wordes moo
And in a toure in anguysshe and with woo
Duellith palamon and his felaw arcite
For euir more ther may no golde them quyte
 Bus passed yere by yere and day by day
t Tyl it felones in a moornyng of May
 That Emely that fairez was to seen
Than is the hely vpon the stalke grene
And fressher than may with floures newe
For with the rose coloure stroue hez he w
I not which was the fairez of them two
Er it was day as was hez wonte to do

She was a ryse and alle redy dight
 For may wol haue no slottarde a nyght
 The season prickith euey gentil hert
 And makith him oute of his slepe to stert
 And sayeth aryse and do thyn obseruaunces
 This makith Emely to haue remembraunces
 To do honour to may and for to ryse
 y clothed fresshe was she to deuyse
 Bez yelow here was broyded on a tresse
 Behinde her bake along yerd I gesse
 And in the gardeyn at the son byriste
 She walked by and down and as her liste
 She gadred floures part white and rede
 To make a subtel chapelet for her hede
 And as an aungel heynly she song
 The grete toure that was so thicke and stronge
 Whiche of the caster was the chief dungeon
 There as the knyghtes were in pryson
 Of whiche I tolde you and telle shalke
 Was euyh ioynaunt to the gardyn walke
 There as this Emely hadde her pleynng
 Bright was the sonne and clere that mornynng
 And palamon this wofulle prisioner
 As was his wone by leue of his gayler
 Was ryse and rowmeth in the chambre on high
 In whiche alle the noble cyte he seith
 And eke the gardyn ful of braunches grene
 There as this fresshe Emely the shene
 Was in her walk and romed by and downe
 This soroufulle prisioner this palamon
 Both in the chambre rowmynng to and fro
 And to him selue compleyned of his woo
 That he was borne fulle ofte he seyde alas

The huygotes tale

And so besylt by auenture and caas
That through a Wyndow of many a barre
Of iron grete and square as any sparre
He cast his eyen vpon Emelya
And therwith he blent and cryed aa
As though he were stongen to the hert
And with that cry arcite anone by sterre
And saide to syn myne what aylith the
That art so pale and dedly on to see
Why criest thou who hath do the offence
For goddes loue take alle in pacience
Dure pryson. for it may non other be
Fortune hath yene vs this aduersite
Or elles som wiked aspecte or disposicion
Of saturne. by som constellation
Hath yene vs this al though we had sworn
So stode the heuyn whan we were born
We must endure this is the shorte and pleyn
This palamon aunswerd and seid a geyn
Cosyn forsoth of this opunyon
Thou hast a deyn ymaginacion
This pryson causeth me nat to crye
But I was hurt now through myn eye
Vnto my hert that wol my bane be
The fairnesse of a lady that I se
yondre in the gardeyn rowmynng to and fro
Is cause of my cryng and my woo
I not whether she be woman or goddesse
But vennis it is forhley as I gesse
And therwith alle on knees down he fylle
And said vennis if it be thy wille
you in this gardeyn thus to transfigure
Bifore me soroufulle wreche thy creature

Dute of this pryson heipe that we may shape
 And if it be oure destynye so be shape
 By eterne worde to dye in pryson
 Of oure lignage haue som compassion
 That is so rowwe y brought by tyrannye
 And with that worde Arcyte can espye
 Where as the lady went to and froo
 And with that sight her beaute hurte him so
 That if palamon were wounded soze
 Arcyte is hurt a smochē oz more
 And with a sygn he sayde piteously
 The fresche beaute me sleeth sodenly
 Of her that rowmeth in yondre place
 And but I haue her mercy and her grace
 That I may see her at the leste wey
 I nam but dede there is no more to seye

His palamon when he these wordes herde
 t Dispiteously he lozeth and aunswerd
 Whether saist thou this in earnest oz in pleye
 Nay quod arcyte in earnest by my say
 God helpe me so I lust ful litel to pleye
 This palamon gan knytte his browes t wey
 It were quod he to the no grete honoure
 For to be fals ne for to be a traytoure
 To me that am thy cosyn and thy brother
 y sworne fuldepe and eche of vs to othez
 That neuiz for to dyen in the peyn
 Tyl that the deth departe shal be vs t weyn
 Neyther of vs in loue to hyndre othez
 Ne in non othez case my leue brother
 And that thou shuldest furthez me
 In euery case as I shulde furthez the
 This was thy othe and myne certeyn

The knyghtes Tale

I wote it wele thou darst it nat withsaien
Thus art thou of my counseil withoute doute
And now thou woldest falsely be aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euiz shalke tulle that myn herte sterue
Now certes fals arcite thou shalt nat so
I loued her first and tolde the my wo
As to my counsel and to my brother sworn
To further me as I haue tolde biforn
For which thou art bounden as a knyght
To helpe me if it lay in thy myght
Or elles art thou fals I dar wele seyn
This arcite fulle proudely spake ageyn
Thou shalt quod he be rather fals than I
But thou art fals I telle the viterly
For paramour I loued her first er thou
What wilt thou seyn thou wifest nat yet now
Whether she be a woman or a goddesse
Thyn is affection of holynesse
And myn is loue as to a creature
For which I tolde the myn auenture
As to my cosyn and my brother sworn
I suppose thou louedest her biforn
Wotest thou nat wele the olde clerkes sawe
That who shalgyue a louez any law
Loue is a greter lawe by my panne
Than may be geue of any erthly man
And therfore positif law and suche decre
Is broken alday for loue in eche degre
A man must nedes loue matre his hede
He may nat fle it though he shuld be dede
Albe she mayde widow or wif
And eke it is nat likely al thy lyf

The knyghtes Tale

To stonde in her grace no more shalle I
For wele thou wotest thy self bereky
That thou and I be dampued to pryson
Perpetually vs ganeth no raunson
We stryue as did the houndes for the bone
They faught alday and yet their part was none
Thez cam a curze while they were so wroth
And baaz a wey the bone bit wix them both
And therfore at the kinges court my brothez
Eche man for him selue there is none othez
Loue if thou list for I loue and ay shalle
And sothly liet brodre this is alle
Here in this pryson must we endure
And euery of vs take his auenture
Grete was the stryf and long betwix them twey
yf that I hadde leysez for to sey
But to the effecte it happed on a day
To telle it you shortly as I may
Worthy duke that hight parotheus
a That fela w was to duke theseus
Sith thilke day that they were children lite
Was come to athenes his fela w to visite
And for to pley as he was wonte to doo
For in this worlde he loued noman soo
And he loued him as tenderly ageyn
So wele they loued as olde bokes sayn
That when that one was dede sothly to telle
His fela w went and sought him down in helle
But of that stozz list me nat to endite
Duke parotheus loued wele arcite
And hadde him know at thebes yere by yere
And finally at the request and prayer
Of parotheus withoute any raunson

Duke Theseus lete him oute of pryson
 frely to go where him list ouer alle
 In suche a gypse as I you telle shalle
 This was the forwarde playnly to endite.
 Betwyte duke Theseus and him arcite
 That if so were that Arcite were founde
 Euir in his lif by day or by stounde
 In any countre of this duke Theseus
 And he were caught. it was accorded thus
 That with a swerde he shurde lese his hede
 There was none othez remedy ne rede
 But takith his leue and homwarde him sprdde
 Let him be waaz his neche rieth to wide
 How grete sorow now suffreth arcite
 His deth he feleth through his herte smyte
 He wepith wayleth and crieth pytiously
 To sle him selue he wayteth pryuelly
 He said alas the day that I was bozn
 Now is my pryson werse than biforn
 Now is me shapen eternally to dwell
 Nat in purgatory but in helle
 Alas that euir knew I Parotheus
 For elles hadde I duelt with Theseus
 y fetred in his pryson euir moo
 Than hadde I be in ease and nat in woo
 Only the sight of her whom that I serue
 Though that I neuir her grace may deserue
 wolde haue suffised right ynow for me
 O dere cosyn Palamon quod he
 Thyng is the victory of this anenture
 Ful blissful in pryson maist thou endure
 In pryson nay. certes but in paradise
 Wele hath fortune to the turned the dysse

The knyghtes Tale

That haste the sight of her and I the absence
For possible it is sithnes thou hast her presence
And art a knyght a worthy man and able
That by som caas sith fortune is chaungeable
Thou mayst somtyme to thy desyre atteyne
But I that am exiled and banisshyd
Of alie grace and so in grete dyspayr
That there nys water erth fyre ne eyre
Ne creature that of them makid is
That may ne hele or do comfort in this
Welle ought I sterue in wanhope and distresse
Fare welle my lif my lust and my gladnesse
Alas why playnen men so in comune
On purueaunce of god or of fortune
That yeueth them ofte in many wise
Welle better than them self can deuyse
Som men desire to haue richesse
That cause is of grete sekeneesse
And som man wolde oute of his pryson fayne
That in his house of his meyne is slayn
Infinite harmes be in this matere
We woot nat what thing we pray here
We faren as he that dronke is as a mouse
A dronken man wote welle he hath an house
But he woot nat whiche is the right wey thider
And to a dronken man the wey is slider
And certes in this worlde so fare we
We seken fast after felicite
But we go wrong ful ofte truly
Thus may we sey alle. and namely I
That wende haue hadde a grete opunyon
That and I myght scape oute of pryson
Than hadde I be in ioye and parfite hele

There now I am exiled fro myn Wele
 Sithnes I may nat se you Emely
 I ne am but dede ther is no remedy
 Upon that othez syde Palamon
 Whan that he wist Arcite was gone
 Suche sorow he maketh that the grete toure
 Resounded of his yelling and clamour
 The pure fetters on his shynnes grete
 Were of his byttre salt teres wete
 Allas quod he Arcite cosyn myne
 Of alle oure stryf god woot the frute is thyne
 Thou walkest now in thebes at thy large
 And of my wo thou yeuest litelle charge
 Thou mayst say thou hast wisdom and manhode
 Assemble alle the folke of oure kynrede
 And make warre so sharpe in this countre
 That by som auenture oz by som tretie
 Thou mast haue her to lady and to wif
 For whom I must uedes lese my lyf
 For as by wey of possibilitie
 Sithnes thou art at large of pryson free
 And art a lorde grete in this anauntage
 More than is myn that sterue here in a cage
 For I may wepe and wail whiles I lyue
 With alle the woo that pryson may me yeue
 And eke withe peyne that loue me yeueth also
 That doubliith alie my tourment and my woo
 Ther with the fyre of Jelousye by stert
 Within his breest and hent him by the herte
 So wodely that he likly was to beholde
 The boy tre oz assen dede oz colde
 That sayde o cruel goddesse that gouerne
 The worlde with byuding of your worde etern

The knyghtes Tale

And Writen in the table of the athamant
your parlement and your etern grant
What is mankynde more vnto you hold
Than is the shepe that rouketh in the fold
For skayn is man right as an other best
And duellith eke in pryson and in arest
And hath seknesse and grete aduersite
And ofte tyme gyltes parde
What gouernail is in this prescience
That gyltes turmentith Innocence
And yet encresith this alle my penaunce
That man is bounde to his obseruaunce
For goddes sake to lettyn of his Wille
There as a beest may alle his lust fulfyll
And whan a beest is dede he hath no peyn
And after his deth man may wepe and pleyne
Though in this worlde he haue care and woo
Withoute doute it may stonde so
The aunswere of this let I to deuynes
But wele I woot in this worlde gret pyne is
Allas I se a serpent or a theif
That many a true man hath do myschief
Gone at his charge and where him list may turne
Vnt I must be in pryson through saturne
And through him vnhappy and eke wood
That hath distroyed wele nygh alle the blode
Of thebes. With his wast walles wide
And venus sleeth me in that other side
For Jelousye and fere of him arcite
Now wol I stint of palamon alyte
And let him in his prison stilke duelle
And of Arcite forth I wolde you telle
The somez passed the nyghtes wayenlough

Encrefith he double wise the peynes strong
 Bothe of the louez and of the prysoner
 I ne woot who hath the wofuller myster
 For shortly to say this palamon
 Perpetually is dampned to pryson
 In theynes and in fetters to be dede
 And Arcite is exiled on his hede
 For euir more as oute of that countre
 For neuir more shal he his lady see
 you louers as he I now this question
 Who hath the worse of Arcite or Palamon
 That one may se his lady day by day
 But in pryson must he duelle alwey
 That othez where him lyst may ryde or go
 But se his lady shalle he neuir mo
 Now demeth as ye list ye that can
 For I wille telle forth as I began
 When that Arcite to the bes come was
 Ful ofte alday he swelt and sayd alas
 For se his lady shal he neuir moo
 And shortly to conclude alle his woo
 So moche sorow ne hath creature
 That is or shalbe while the worlde may dure
 His slepe his mete his drinke is him be raft
 That lene he way and drye as is a shaft
 His eyen hollow and grisle to beholde
 His hew fela w and pale as a ffhen colde
 And solitary he was and euir allone
 And wayling al the nyght making his mone
 And if he herd song or instrument
 Than wolde he wepe he myght nat stent
 So feble were his spirites and so low
 And chaunged so that no man coude know

The knyghtes Tale

His speche ne his boyce thought men it herde
As in his gyre for alie the worlde it ferde
Noght only lyke thre louers malady
Of hereos but rather like to many
Engendred of humouze malancolike
Beforn in his celle fantaslike
And shortly turned by so down
Both habite and disposicioun
Of him this woful louez dan Arcite
What sholde I of his wo alday endite
Whan he endured hadde a yere or two
This cruel turment this peyne and woo
At Thebes in his countre as I sayde
Upon a nyght in slype as he him layde
Him thought how that wynged Mercury
Biforn him stode and badde him be mery
His slepp yerd he baaz in honde by right
An hat he wered vpon his heres bright
Arzayed was this god as he toke kepe
As he was whan argus toke his shepe
And sayd him thus to Athenes thou shalt wende
There is the shape of thy woo an ende
And with that worde Arcite a woke and stert
Now truy how soze that me smert
Quod he to Athenes wil I fare
Ne for no drede of deth shal I spare
To se my lady that I loue and serue
In her presence reche I nat to sterue
And with that worde he caught a myrouz
And saw that chaunged was his colouz
And saw his bisage in a nother kynde
And right anone it ran him in his mynde
That sithen his face was so disfigured

The knyghtes Take

Of malady the whiche he hadde endured
He myght wele if that he bare him low
Byue in athenes euir more vnknow
And se his lady wele nygh day be day
And right anone he chaunged his aray
And cladde him in a poure labourez
And alone saue only a poure squere
That knew his pryuite and alle his caas
Whiche was disguysed pourly as he was
To athenes is he gone the next way
And to the courte he went vpon a day
And at the gate he profered his seruice
To drugg and to draue & what men wolde deuyse
And shortly of this matere for to seyn
He fil in office toward a chamberleyn
The whiche that was duelling with Emely
For he was wise and wele coude a spye
Of euery seruaunt whiche that serued there
Wele coude he he wode and water here
For he was yong and mighty for the nones
And therto he was strong and big of bones
To do that ony wight him coude deuyse
A yere or two he was in this seruice
Page in the chambre of Emely the brighthe
And philostrate he seyde that he hight
But half so wele a loued man as he
Ne was there none in courte of his degre
He was so gentyll of condicion
That through alle the courte of his rencun
They sayde that it were grete charyte
That Theseus wolde enhaunse his degre
And put him in a worshipful seruice
There that he myght his vertue exercyse

And thus Within a while his name sprong
 Both of his dedes and of his gode tong
 That Theseus hath take him so nere
 That of his chambre he made him a squire
 And gaue him golde to mayntene his degre
 And eke men brought him oute of his countre
 fro yere to yere ful priuely his rent
 But honestly and slightly he it spent
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde
 And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde
 And bare him in pease and eke in werre
 There was noman that Theseus hadde derre
 And in this blisse lete I now arcite
 a And speke I wille of Palamon a lite
 In derkenesse horrible and strong pryson
 This seyn yere hath sete this Palamon
 For yned what for woo and distresse
 Who feith double woo and heynesse
 But Palamon that loue distreyneth soo
 And wode oute of his witte he goth for woo
 And eke therto he is a prysoner
 Parpetualie and nat only for a yere
 Who coude ryme in englyshe propirly
 His martirdome forsoth it am nat I
 Therfore I passe aslightly as I may
 It fyl in that seynth yere in may
 The thridde nyght as olde bokes sayn
 That alle this story tellen more playn
 Were it by auenture or destyne
 As that whan a thing is shappn it shalbe
 That sone after the midnyght Palamon
 By helpe of a frende broke hath his pryson
 And fleeth the cyte as sone as he may go

The knyghtes Tale

For he hadde yene his gayler drinke so
Of a clarrey made of a certayne wyne
With nercotises and oppe of thebes fyne
That alle nyght though men wolde him shake
The gayler so slepte he myght nat awake
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may
The nyght was shorthe and fast by the day
That nedes cost he must him selue hyde
And to a groue fast there beside
With dredeful fote than stalkith palamon
For shortly this was his opunyon
That in that groue he wolde him hide alday
And in the nyght than wolde he take his wey
To thebes warde his frendes for to prey
On Theseus to helpe him to werrey
And shortly eyther he wolde lese his lyf
Or wyne faire Emely to his wif
This is the effecte and the entent playne
Now wol I turne to Arcite ateyn
That lytel wist how nyght was his care
Tyl that fortune hadde brought him in the snare
The mery larke messanger of day
Salueth in her song the morow gray
And firy phebus riseth vp so bright
That alle the orient laughith of that sight
And with the stremes drieth the greues
The siluer droppes hanging on the leues
And Arcite that in the courte ryalle
With theseus his squyer principalle
Is rysen and loketh on the mery day
And for to do his obseruance to may
Remembring on the poynte of his desire
He on his cousez startling as the fyre

The knyghtes tale

As ryden to the felde him to pley
Dute of the courte were it a myle or twey
And to the groue of whiche that I you tolde
By auenture his wey he can to horde
To make him a garlond of the greues
Were it of wodebinde or of hauthornleues
And loude he song ayenst the sonne shene
May with alle thy floures and thy grene
Welcom be thou fresshe faire may
In hope that I som grene get may
And fro his courser with a lusty herte
Into the groue ful hastily he sterte
And in a pathe he rowmed by and down
There as by auenture this Palamon
Was in a busshe that noman might him se
Foz sore aferde of his deth was he
No thing knew he that this was Arcite
God wote he wolde haue trowed it fulle lite
But soth is sayd go sithen many yeres
That feld hath eyen and wode hath eres
It is fulle faire a man to bere him eyn
Foz alday men mete at ynset steyn
Foz litel went Arcite of his felawe
That was so nygh to her kyn alle his saw
Whan that Arcite hadde rowmed al his fille
Palamon in the busshe now sitteth stille
And Arcite song alle the roundel lustily
Into a studie he fel sodenly
As doon these louers in thei2 quente yeres
Now in the crop and now in the breeres
Now by now down as bohet in a wellle
Right as the fryday sothly foz to telle
Now it sbyneth now it reyneth fast

The knyghtes Tale

Right so can guerzzy Venus ouer cast
The hertes of her folke right as her day
Is gueriful. right so chaunged she aray
Selden is the fryday alle the woke like
Whan that arcite hadde songe he gan to like
And he set him down withoute any more
Alas quod he the day that I was bore
How long Juno through thy cruckte
Wilt thou werien thebes the cyte
Alas y brought is to confusion
The brode ryalle of Cadme and Amphion
Of Cadmus whiche was the first man
That Thebes bilte or first the toun bigan
And of the cyte first was crowned king
Of his lynage am I and of his offspring
By verzay lyne as of the stoke ryalle
And now I am so kaptif and so thralle
That he that is my mortalle enemy
I serue him and am his squierz pouerly
And yet doth me Juno wele more shame
For I dare nat be knowe myn owen name
But there as I wouste was to hight Arcite
Now hight I philostrate nat worth a myte
Alas thou fel mars alias thou Juno
Thus your ire hath our lynage alforde
Saue only me and wrechid palamon
That Theseus martreth in pryson
And ouer alle thus to sle me btterly
Loue hath his spy darte so brennyngly
It strypheth through my true careful herte
That shapen was erst my dethe than my sherte
ye sle me with your eyen Emely
ye be the cause wherfore that I dye

The knyghtes tale

Of alle the remenaunt of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountance of a tare
So that I coude do aught to your plesaunce
And with that worde he fyl down in a traunce
A longe tyme and afterwarde he by stert
This Palamon that thought through his herte
He felt a colde swerde sodently glyde
For ire he quoke he nolde no lengre abide
And whan that he hath herd Arcites tale
As he were wode with face dede and pale
He stert him by oute of the busshes thicke
And seide Arcite false traytour wiche
Now art thou hent that louest my lady soo
For whom that I haue this peyne and woo
And art my blode and to my counceyl sworn
And I ful ofte haue tolde the here bifore
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus
I wil be dede or elles thou shalt dye
Thou shalt nat loue my lady Emely
But I wille loue her only and no moo
For I am Palamon thy mortal soo
And though I haue no wepyn in this place
But oute of pryson am stert by grace
I drede nat outhere thou shalt dye
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emely
These whiche thou wilt, thou shalt nat a sterte
This Arcite with full despitous herte
Whan he him knew and hadde his tale herde
As ferse as yron pulled oute his swerde
And sayde thus by god that sytte a boue
Ner it that thou art seke and wode for loue
And ke that thou no wepyn hast in this place

The knyghtes Tale

Thou sholdest neuiz oute of this groue pace
That thou ue shuldest dye of myn hond
For I desye thy surete and thy bond
Which that thou sayst I haue made to the
What berzy fole thinke that loue is fre
And I wol loue her magre al thy might
But for a smorhe as thou art a knyght
And wilnest to darrayne here by bataille
Haue here my trowth to morow I wille nat fayle
Withoute witting of any othez wight
That here I wolbe founden as a knyght
And bringen harneys right ynow for the
And chese the best and leue the worst to me
And mete and drinke this nyght wil I bring
ynow for the and clothes for thy bedding
And if so be that thou my lady wyne
And sle me in this wode that I am in
Thou maist wele haue thy lady as for me
This palamon aunswerd I grant it the
And thus they be departed til amozow
When either of them hath leid his feith to bozow
Occupied oute of alle charite
Dregne that woldest haue no felaw with the
ful soth is said that loue ne lordship
Wil nat his thankes haue ony felawship
We finde this of arcite and palamon
Arcite is ryden anone into the toun
And on the morowe anone oz it were light
ful pryuelly two harneys hath he dight
Both sufficient and mete and to darzeyen
The bataylle in the felde bitwix them twayne
And on his horse allone as he was born
He caried the harneys him biforen

And in the groue at tyme and place set
 This arcite and this palamon been mette
 Tho chaunge gan the colour in her face
 Right as the hunters in regne of trace
 That stondesth at the gappe with a spere
 Whan hunted is the loun and the bere
 And herith hym come ruffhing in the greues
 And brekith both bowes and eke leuys
 And thinketh here cometh my mortal ennemy
 With oute faile he must be dede or I
 For ether I must sle him atte gappe
 Or he must sle me if I mys happe
 So ferden they in chaunging of theiz bew
 As fer as ony of them othez knew
 Ther nas no gode day ne saluyng
 But streight with oute wordes of rehersing
 Eueriche of them helpith to arme othez
 As frendly as he were his owen brothez
 And after that with sharpe speres stronge
 They foyney eche at othez wondre long
 Thou myghtist wene that this palamon
 In his feghting were a wode loun
 And as a cruel tigre was arcite
 As wilde bores can they to gidde smyte
 That froten white as fome for ire wode
 Up to the ancle faught they in theiz blode
 And in this wise I lette them fyghting duelle
 And forsoth I wil of the seus you telle
 The desteny mynistre generalle
 That executeth in the worlde ouer alle
 The purueaunce that god hath seen biforn
 So strange it is that though the worlde hath sworn
 The contrary of a thing by ye or nay

yet somtyme it shal falle vpon a day
 That fallith nat est in a thousand yere
 And certaynly our appetites here
 Be it of pease hate warre or loue
 Alle is ruled by the sight aboue
 This mene I now by myghty Theseus
 That for to hunte is so desirous
 And namely at the grete herte in May
 That in his bedde there dwelith him no day
 That he nyght cladde and ridy for to ryde
 With hunte and horne and houndes him beside
 For in his huntynge hath he suche delite
 That it is alle his ioye and alle his appetite
 To be him selue the grete hertes bane
 For after Mars he serued no dyane
 Clere was the day as I haue tolde er this
 And theseus with alle ioye and blis
 With his ypolita the faire quene
 And smely yclothed alle in grene
 And huntynge been they ryden ryally
 And to the groue that stode there fast by
 In whiche ther was an herte as men him tolde
 Duke Theseus the streight wey hath holde
 And to the lande he rideth fulle right
 For thider was the hert wont to haue his flight
 And ouer a broke and so forth on his wey
 The duke wolde haue a cours of him or twey
 With houndes suche as he list to comande
 And whan this duke was come to the lande
 Andre the sonne he looked and that anon
 He was waar of Arcite and Palamon
 That foughten brewe as it were boles two
 The bright swerdes went to and fro

So hidoufly that with the lest stroke
 He semed that it wolde haue felled an oke
 But what they were nothing he ne wote
 This duke with his spores his courser smote
 And at a stert he was betwix them two
 And pulled oute his suerde and sayde ho
 No more on peyne of lesing of your hede
 By myghty mars anone he shalbe dede
 That smyteth any stroke that I may se
 But teliith me what my size men ye be
 That been so hardy to fight here
 Withoute any Juge or othez officere
 As though it were in listes ryalty
 This Palamon aunswerd hasteiy
 And sayde sir what nedith wordes moo
 We haue the deth deserued bothe two
 Two woful wrechis be we two captyues
 That been encombred of oure owne lyues
 And as thou arte a rightful lorde and iuge
 Ne yeue vs nether mercy ne refuge
 But sle me first for seint charite
 But slee my fela we ike as wele as me
 Or sle him first for though thou know him lite
 He is thy mortalie foo this is arcite
 That fro thy londe was banysshed on his hede
 For whiche he hath deserued to be dede
 For this is he that cam to thy gate
 And sayde that he hight philostrate
 Thus he hath iaped the ful many a yere
 And thou hast made him thy chief squyer
 And this is he that loueth Emely
 For sithnes the day is come that I shalle dye
 I make pleynly my confessioun

The knyghtes Tale

That I am that woful Palamon
That hath thy pryson broke wickedly
I am thy mortal foo and he am I
That loueth so hote Emely the bright
That I wol dye here present in her sight
Therefore I aske deth of my Jewyse
But she my felaw in the same wise
For both haue we deserued to be slayn

His worthy Duke aunswered anone ageyn
t And said this is a shorte conclusioun
your own mouth be your confessioun
Hath dampned you and I wil it recorde
It nedith nat to peyne you with the corde
ye shalbe dede by myghty Mars the rede
The quene anone for veray womanhede
Can to wepe and so did Emely
And alle the ladies in that company
Grette pyte was as them thought alle
That euir suche a chaunce sholde be falle
For gentylmen they were and of grette astate
And no thing but for loue was this debate
And saw theiir bloody woundes wyde and soze
And alle cryden both lasse and more
Haue mercy lorde bpon vs women alle
And on theiir bare knees down they falle
And wolde haue kyssed his feet there as he stode
Til at the last slaked was his mode
For pyte renneth sone in gentyl hert
And though he first for ire quoke and stert
He considered shortly in a clause
The trespas of them both and eke the cause
And al though that his ire theiir gilt accused
yet in his reason he them bothe excused

The knyghtes Tale

As thus he thought that euery man
Wol helpe him selue in loue as he can
And deliuez him selue oute of pryson
And eke in his hert he hadde compassion
Of women for they were euez in one
And in his gentyl hert he thought anoon
And soft vnto him selue he sayd fy
Vpon a lord that wyl haue no mercy
But be a spoun both in word and dede
To them that been in repentaunce and drede
As wele as a proude dispitous man
That wyl mayntene that he first began
That lord hath lytel of discrecion
That in suche a caas can no diuision
But wepeth pryde and humblenesse after one
And shortly whan his ire is thus a gone
He gan to loke on them with eyen blake and bly
And spake these wordes al on hys
The god of loue a benedicite
How myghty and how grete a lord is he
Apenst his might ther gayneth non obstakyl
He may be cleped a god for his myracle
For he can make at his owyn guyse
Of euery herte as him list deuyse
So here this Arcite and this palamon
That queyntly cam oute of my prison
And myght haue lyued in Thebes ryally
And knowen that I am their mortal enemy
And that their deth lieth in my myght also
And yet hath loue maugre their eyen two
Brought them hithez both for to dye
Now loketh is nat this an high folpe
Who may be a foole But if that he loue

The knyghtes Tale

Beholde for goddes sake that sitteth aboue
Se how they blede be they nat wele arrayed
Thus hath their lord the god of loue them payd
Their wages and their fees of their seruice
And yet they wene for to be ful wise
That serue loue for aught that may falle
But this is yet the best game of alle
That she for whom they haue this Jolite
Can them therfore as moche thanke as me
She wote nomore of alle this hote fare
By god than wote a cuckow or an hare
But al must be assayd hote or colde
A man must be a foole yong or olde
I wote it by my selue fullong agoon
For in my tyme a seruaunt was I one
And therfore sithnes I knew of loues peyne
And wote how sore it can a man distreyn
As he that hath be caught in this laas
I you foryeue alle holly this trespass
And atte request of the quene that kneleth here
And eke of Emely my sustre dere
And ye shal both anone vnto me swere
That neuir mo ye shal my countrre dere
Ne make warre on me nyght ne day
But be my frendes in alle that ye may
I you foryeue this trespass enerydele
And they him sware his a shing faire and wele
And him of lordship and mercy prayed
And he them graunted and thus he sayd
I speke of worthy lynnage and richesse
t Though that she were a quene or a princeffe
Eche of you both is worthy doutelesse
To wedde whan tyme is. But neuirthelesse

The knyghtes Tale

I speke as for my sustre Emely
Foz whom ye haue this stryf and this Jelousy
ye wote your self ye may nat wedde two
at oues. though that ye fight euir mo
That one of you al be him loth or lief
He mot go pype in an Iuy leef
This is to sey she may nat haue both
Al be ye neuir so Jelous and so lothe
And for thy I you put in this degre
That eche of you shal haue his destene
As him is shapyn and her kyn in what wise
So here your ende of that I shal deuyse
My wyl is this for plat conclusioun
Withoute any more replicacioun
yf that you lyketh take it for the best
That eueriche of you shalle go where him lyst
frelly withoute raunson or daungere
And this day fyfty wekes fer ne nere
Eueriche of you shal bring an hundreth knyghtes
Armed for lystes by at al rightes
Al redy to darzeyne here by batayle
And this behote I you with oute fayle
Vpon my trouthe and as I am true knyght
That whether of you both hath that myght
That is to sey whether he or thou
May with his hundreth as I spake of now
Sle his contrary or oute of lystes dryue
Him shal I yeue Emely to wyue
To whom that fortune yeueth so faire a grace
The lystes shal I make on this place
And god so wisly on my soule rewe
As I shal euyne iuge be and true

The knyghtes Tale

ye shal none othez ende With me make
That one of you ne shalbe dede or take
And if ye thinke this is wele sayd
Sayeth yourz auyse and hold you paide
This is yourz end and yourz conclusioun
Who lokith now lightly but Palamon
Who spryngeth vp for ioy but Arcite
Who coude tel or who coude endite
The ioy that made is in this place
When Theseus hadde do so fayre a grace
But down a knees went euery wight
And thanked him with al their myght
And nameky the Thebans oft sithe
And thus with gode hope and herte blyth
They take their leue and homward they ryde
To thebes with his olde walles wyde
I trow men wolde it deme negligence
yf I foryete to telle the dispence
Of Theseus that goth so besily
To make vp the lystes ryally
That suche a noble theatre as it was
I dar wele say in this worlde there nas
The circuyte a myle therof was aboute
Walled with stone and diche d rounde aboute
Rounde was the shappe in maner of a compas
ful of degrees the hight of sixty paas
That whan a man was sette in one degre
He letted nat his felaw for to see
Eastward there was a gate of marbyl white
Westwarde suche an nother in thopposite
And shortly to conclude suche a place
Was none in erth of so lytel space
For in the londe ther was no craftes man

The knyghtes Tale

That geometry or arismetryk can
Ne portreture ne haruar of ymages
That Theseus ne yaf mete and wages
The theatre for to make and deuyse
And for to do his rpte and his sacrifice
He Estwarde hath by on the gate aboue
In worship of venus goddesse of loue
Do make an autre and an Oratory
And on the Westwarde in memory
Of mars. hath he made suche an othez
That cost large of gold a fothez
And northward in a toure of the walle
Of whyte alabastr and rede corall
An oratory riche for to see
In worship of dyane goddesse of chastite
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wise
But yet hadde I forgete for to deuyse
The noble haruyng and the portretures
The shap the countenance and the figures
That weren in the oratours thre
First in the temple of venus thou mayst se
Wrought in the walle ful pytously to beholde
The broken stepis and the sighes colde
The secrete terys and the weymentyng
The fyrre strokes and the desiring
That loues folkes in this worlde enduryng
The othes that thei couenauntes assuryng
Plesaunce hope desire and fool hardynesse
Beaute and youthe baudry and richesse
Charmes and socery le synnges and flattery
Dyspense besynesse and jelousy
That wered of yelow gooldes a garlond
And a cuckow sitting on her hond

The knyghtes Tale

Swetestes instrumentes carolles and daunses
Lust and arrape and eke the circumstaunces
Of loue. Whiche that I rehyne and tel shalke
Be ordre were peynted on the walle
And mo than I can make mencion
For sothly alle the mounte of Cicheron
That venus hath her principaile duelling
Was shewed on the wal her portryng
With al the ioy and alle the lustynes
Nat was foryeten the porters ydlnesse
Ne Narcisus the fayre yore agoon
Ne yet the foly of king Salamon
The enchauntment of medea and hardynesse
Of Jason I wil nat now expresse
Ne yet the strenght of hercules
The enchauntment of medea and Circes
Ne of turnus with his hard spers corage
The riche Cresus captyf in seruage
Thus may ye se that wisdom ne richesse
Beaute strenght strenght ne hardynesse
Ne may with venus horde champartie
For as she lyst the worlde she may tye
So alle these folke caught were in her laas
Tyl they for wo ful oft sayd allas
Suffiseth these ensamples one or two
And though I coude rehyne a thousand mo
The statne of venus glorious for to se
Was naked. sietyng in the large see
And fro the nauyl down al couerd she was
With wawes grene and bright as any glas
A cytole in her right hand hadde she
And on her hede ful semely on to se
A rose garland. freshe and wel smelling

A boue hez hede dounes also fly hering
 Bi forz hez stode hez sonne cuppydo
 Upon his shulders wynges hadde he two
 And blynde he was as it is ofte seen
 A bow he baaz and arowes bright and hene
 Why sholde I nat eke telle you alle
 The portryng that was spon the walle
 Within the temple of myghty mars the rede
 Alle was peynted the walles in length and brede
 Lyke to the Estris of the gryssy place
 That hight the grete temple of mars in trace
 In that colde northery frosty regioun
 There as Mars hath his souerayne mansioun
 fyrst on the walle was peynted a forest
 In whiche thez duellith neyther man ne best
 With knotty and knerry barayn trees olde
 Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to beholde
 In whiche ran as a rumbyl in a snow
 As though it a storme were shold brest every bow
 And downward on an hyl vndre abent
 There stode the temple of marce armypotent
 wrought of alle burnyd stele the which the entre
 was long and streyght and gastly for to se
 And theroute cam a rage and suche a beyse
 That it made alle the gates for to reyse
 The northron light at the doze shone
 For wyndow on the walle was thez none
 Throuth which men myght any light discernen
 The dozes wer al of a the maundes etern
 y clenchyd ouerthwart and endlong
 With iron tow for to make it strong
 Every pyler the temple for to susteyn
 Was tonne grete of yron bryght and shene

The knyghtes Tale

There saw I first the derke ymagynyng
Of felony and alle the compassyng
The cruel ire rede as any gleden
The pyhpurs and eke the pale drede
The smylez with the knyf bndre the cloke
The shepen brennyng with the blaue smoke
The treson of the murdring in the bedde
The open werzys with woundes alle bledde
Contake with bloody knyf and sharpe manace
And ful of chirlyng was that sozpy place
The skeer of him selue yet saw I there
His herte blode hath bated al his chere
The nayle y dryue in the shode an hight
The colde deth with mouth gapyng by right
A myddel of the temple sat myschaunce
With discomforte and sorpy contenaunce
yet saw I wodenesse laugghing in his rage
Armed compleynt. othes and spers corage
The carayne in the busshe with throte y coure
A thousand slayn. and nat of qualme y stour
The tiraunt with the praye by force y rast
The toun dystroyed ther was no thing last
yet saw I Brent the shippes hoppsteris
The hunter strangled with the wilde berys
The sow fretynge the childe in the cradyl
The cooke y scalded for alle his long ladyl
Nat forgettyn was the infortuue of marte
The cartez ouer ryden with his own carte
Vndre the whele ful lowe he lay a down
There were also of martes deuyssioun
The barbour the bouchez and the smyth
That forged sharpe swerdes in the stith
And al a boue depaynted in a toure

Sawe I conquest sittynge in grete honouze
 With the sharpe swerd ouer his hede
 Hangynge by a subtil twyned threde
 Dereynted was there the slaughter of Julius
 Of grete Nero and of Anthonius
 Albe it that thilke tyme they were vnborn
 yet was their deeth paynted ther bifore
 By manysshing of Mars right by figure
 So was it shewed right by portreture
 As it is depaynted in the sterres aboue
 who shalbe slayn or elles dede for loue
 Suffiseth one ensample in stozes olde
 I may nat rekyne them alie though I wolde
 The statue of Mars vpon a carte stode
 Armed and looked grym as he were wode
 And ouer his hede ther shynen two figures
 Of sterres that been callid in scriptures
 That one puella hight that otheer Rubeus
 This god of armes was arayed thus
 A wolf ther stode bifore him at his feet
 With eyen rede and of a man he ete
 With subtil pensel was payntid this stoz
 In redoubtyng of Mars and of his glorie
 Now to the temple of dyane the chaste
 As shortly as I can I wil me haste
 To telle you alle the descripcion
 Depaynted been the walles by and down
 Of huntynge and of shamefast chastite
 Ther saw I how woful Calistope
 Whan dyane greuyd was with her
 Was turned fro a woman to a bere
 And after was she made the lode sterre
 Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre

The knyghtes Take

Her sonne is eke a sterre as men may se
There saw I dane turned vntyl a tre
I mene nat the goddesse dyane
But peneus doughter which that hight dane
There saw I atheon an hert y make d
For vengeaunce that he saw dyane al naked
I saw how that houndes haue him caught
And fretyn him for they knew him naught
yet y peynted was a litel furthermore
How athalante hunted the wy lde boze
And meliager and many othez mo
For which dyane wrought him care and woo
There saw I many a nothez wondre stozp
The whiche me list nat draw in memory
This goddesse on an hert high is sete
With smale houndes al aboute her fete
And vnderneath her feet she had a mone
weyng it was and shold wane sone
In gawdy grene her statue clothed was
With bow in hond and arowes in a caas
Her eyen cast she ful low a down
There pluto hath his derke region
A woman traueling was her bifez
But for her childe was so long vnborn
ful pytously lucyna gan she calle
And sayd help for thou mayst best of alle
wele coude he peynte lyuely that it wrought
With many a flozpn he his he w s bought
 Dw been these lystes made and Theseus
n That at his grete cost hath arayed thus
The temples and the theatre euerydel
Whan it was doon it lyked him wondre wele
But stynt I byl of Theseus aite

The knyghtes tale

And speke of Palamon and Arcite
The day approacheth of theire retornynge
That eueryche shold an hundreth knyghtes bring
The batayle to darzeyn as I you tolde
And to Athenes theire couenaunt for to holde
Hath euerych of them brought an hundreth knyghtes
Wele y armed for the warre at al rightes
And spherly there troved many a man
That neuiz sith the worlde began
As for to speke of knyghthode of theire hond
As fer as god hath made see and lond
Was of so few so noble a company
For euery wight that loue dcheualry
And wolde his thankes haue a passing name
Hath praye d that he might be of that game
And wel was him that therto chosen was
For if thez fyl to morow suche a caas
ye know wil that euery lusty knyght
That loueth paramours and hath his myght
Were it in englonde or elles wher
They wolde theire thankes wille d to be thez
To fight for a lady a benedicite
It were a lusty sight for to se
And right so faireth they with Palamon
With him thez went knyghtes many oon
Som word be armed in habergeon
Som in brest plate and in light gippon
And som wol haue a peiz of plate s large
And som wolde haue a pryce shield and targe
Som wold be armed on his legges wele
And haue an ay and som a mace of stele
Thez is no new guyse but it was holde
Armed were they as I haue tolde

The knyghtes Tale

Eueriche after his own opunyon
There mayst thou se comyng With Palamon
Figurte him silue the grette kyng of trace
Blake was his berde and manly was his face
The circles of his eyen in his hede
They glowden betwix yelow and rede
And lyke a gryffyn loked he aboute
With hempte heres in his browes stoute
His lymes grette his braunes herde and strong
His shuldres brode his armes rounde and long
And as the gypse was in his countre
Fulke high vpon a chare of golde stode he
With four white boles in the trays
In stede of cote armure ouer his harnes
With nayles yelow and bright as any golde
He hadde a bere shynne cool blake for oide
His long heres were hempt behinde his bahe
As any rauyn fether it shone for blake
A wrethe of golde arme grette of huge weyght
Vpon his hede sat ful of stons bright
Of fyn rubyes and of fyn diamantes
Aboute his chare ther went alauntes
Twenty and moo as grette as any steer
To hunte atte loun or elles at the deer
And folowed him with mosel fast y bounde
Colers of golde and tozettes spyled rounde
An hundreth lordes he hadde in his rowte
Armed wel with bertes sterne and stoute
y the Arcite as men in stozp fynde
W The strong Emetrius the kyng of ynd
Vpon a bay stede y trapped alle in stele
Armed with a cloth of gold y diapred wese
Cam ridyng lyke god of armes marce

The knyghtes tale

His cloth armure was of cloth of tarce
Couched with perles white rounde and grete
His sadyl was of Brent golde new y bete
A mantelet on his shulders hanging
Bret ful of rubyes bright as fyre sparkling
His bright crispe here lyke rnynges were ronne
And that was yelow and glittered as the sonne
His nose was high his eyen bright cytrine
His lippes rounde his cclour was sangwyne
A few fraikes in his face were sprent
Betwix yelow and som dele blake y meynt
And as a spoun he lohed aboute faste
Of xxv yere of age I him cast
His berde was wele begonne for to spring
His voyce was as a trompe thondring
Upon his hede he wered of laurer grene
A garland freshe and lusty for to sene
Upon his honde he baar for his ded wyte
An ettle tame as any lyle white
An hundredth knyghtes hadd he with him there
Al armed saue theire hedes in alle theire here
Were richly arrayed in al maner thinges
Trustith wele al erles dukes and kinges
Were gadred in this noble company
For loue and encrece of cheualrye
Aboute this king there ronnen on euery parte
Wele many a tame lioun and libart
And in this wise the lordes alle and som
Been on the sonday to the cite com
Aboute pry me and in the towne a light
This Theseus this duke this worthy knyght
When he hadde brought them into his cite
And ynned them eueryche at his degre

The Mount
of

He festith them and doth so grete labour
 To ease them and to do them alle honoure
 That men wenen that no mannes witte
 Of none astate ne coude amende it
 The mynstralcy the seruice at the feste
 The grete gistes to the moost and the leste
 The riche arrape of Theseus paleys
 Ne who sat first ne last vpon the dese
 Or what ladies fayrest been or best daunsyng
 Or which of them can best daunce or syng
 Ne who moost felynghly speke th of loue
 What ha whes spt on the piches aboue
 What houndes lpen in the flooz down
 Of al this make I no mencion
 But of the effecte that thynketh me best
 Now comyth the poynthe and herkyne if ye lyst
 He sonday at nyght or day began to spring
 t When palamon herd the larke syng
 Al though it were nat day by oures two
 yet song the larke and palamon right thro
 With holy herte and with an high corage
 Is rysen to wende on his pilgramage
 Vnto the blissful Sotherea benygne
 I mene venus honourable and digne
 And in her houre he walked forth apace
 Vnto the lystes there her temple was
 And down he knelith and with humble chere
 And with hert soze he sayde as ye shal here
 Fayrest o fayre olady myn venus
 Doughter to Iouis and spouse to Iulcanus
 That gladdest al the mount of Sitheron
 For that loue that thou haddest to Adon
 Haue pytee on my byttre teres smert

The knyghtes Tale

And take my humbly prayer to thy hert
Allas I haue no langage for to telle
The effecte ne the turment of myn helle
Myn hert may nat myn harmes be wrey
I am so sorouful that I can nat sey
But mercy lady bright that knowest wele
My thought and seest the harmes that I fele
Considre this and rewe vpon my soze
As wysly as I shal for euirmore
Emforth my myght thy true seruauant to be
And holde warre lady alwey with chasteite
That I make myn auowe so ye me help
I kepe nat of armes for to yelpe
Ne I aske nat to morow for to haue the victory
Ne renoun in this caas ne beynglozy
Of pryse of armes to blow vp and down
But I wolde fully haue possioun
Of E melody and dye in her seruice
Fynde thou the manere how and what wyse
I retche nat but it may bettre be
To haue victory of them or they of me
So that I haue my lady in myn armes
For though so be that mars be god of armes
your vertue is so grete in heuyn aboue
That if thou lyst I shalle haue my loue
Thy temple wol I worship euirmo
And on an autre where I ryde or goo
I wol do sacrifice and spres bete
And if ye wyl nat so my lady swete
Than pray I the to morow with a spere
That Arcite me though the herte bere
Than reche I nat whan I haue lost my lyf
Though that Arcyte wedde her to wif

The knyghtes Tale

This is the effect and ende of my prayer
pene me my loue my blissed lady dere
Whan that the ozyson was done of palamon
His sacrifice he did and that anone
ful pitously With alle circumstaunces
Al telle I nat now his obseruaunces
And alle the statue of vennys shoke
And made a signe wherby that he toke
That his prayer accepted was that day
Foz though the figure shewed delay
yet wist he wele that graunted was his bone
And with gladdde herte he went him home sone
The thriddeoure equal that palamon
Began to venus temple for to goon
þ þ rose the sonne and þp rose þ melody
And to the temple of dyane gan hþe
þer maydens that she with þer thidez lad
ful redely with them the fyre they had
þence the clothes and the remenaunt alle
That to the sacrifice longen shalle
The hornes ful of methe as was the guyse
There lacked naught to doon þer sacrifice
Smoking the temple ful of clothes fayre
This þ melody with hert debonayr
þer body wesse with water in a welle
But how she did there I dar nat telle
But it be any thing in generalle
And yet it were a game for to here alle
To him that menyth wele it were no charge
But it is gode a man be at his large
þer bright here was kempt and þntressed alle
And a crowne of grene oke fery alle
þpon þer hede was set ful fayre and mete

The knyghtes Tale

Two fyres on the autre can she bete
And did her thinges as men may beholde
In state of Thebes and in bokes olde
Whan kyndled was the fyre with pytous chere
Unto dyane she spake as ye may here
O chaste goddesse of the wode grene
To whom both heuyn and erth and see is sene
Quene of the regne of pluto derke and low
Goddesse of maydens that my hert hast know
Ful many a yere and wotest what I desyre
As kepe me fro the vengeaunce and thyn ire
That Atheon abought truly
Chaste goddesse wele wotest thou that I
Desire to be a mayden alle my lyf
Ne neuiz wol I be loue ne wyf
I am thou wotest yet of thy company
A mayden. and loue huntynge and venozp
And for to walke in the wodes wilde
And nat to be a wif and be with childe
Naught wil I know company of man
Now help me lady sithnes thou mayst and can
For the thre fourmes that thou hast in the
And palamon that hath suche loue to me
And eke Arcite that loueth me so sore
This grace I pray the withouten more
As send loue and pease bitwix them two
And fro me turne a wey thei herthes so
That al thei hote loue and alle thei desire
And al thei besy turment and al thei fyre
Be queynte or turned in a nother place
And if so be thou wil do me no grace
Or if my desteny be shapen soo
That I shal nedes haue one of them two

The knyghtes Tale

As send me him that moost desireth me
Beholde goddesse of clene chastite
The byttre teres that on my chekes falle
Sithnes thou art a mayde and kepar of vs alle
My maydenhede thou kepe and wele conserue
And whiles I kyne a mayden wol I the serue
The fyres brenne vpon the auters clere
Whil Emely was thus in her prayer
But sodenly she saw a light queynt
For right anone oon of the fyres queynt
And quiked a yen and after that anone
That othez fyre was queynt and alle agone
And as it queynt it made a whistling
As doon these wete brondes in their brennyng
And at the brondes ende out ran anone
As it were droppes bloody many one
For why she so soze agast was Emely
Than she was almoost mad and gan to cry
For she ne wist what it signified
But only for fere thus hath she cryed
And wept that it was pyte to here
And therewithalle dyane gan appere
With bow in honde right as an huntresse
And sayd doughter stynt thyn heuy nesse
Among the goddes an high it is affermed
And by etern worde writen and confermed
Thou shalt be wedded vntyl one of them two
That haue for the so moche care and wo
But on to whiche of them may I nat telle
fare wele for I may no lenger duelle
The fyres whiche on myn autre brenne
Shal the declare or that thou go henne
Thyn auenture of loue as in this caas

The knyghtes Tale

And with that worde the arrowes in the caas
Of the goddesse claterynge fast and ryng
And forth she went and made a banysshing
For whiche this Emely astonyed was
And sayd what amounteth this alas
I put me vnder thy protection
Dyane and in thy disposicion
And home she goth anone the next wey
This is the effecte ther is no more to sey
In the next houre of mars after this

Write vnto the temple Walked is
a Of fyres mars to do his sacrifice
With alle the rightes of his paynem wise
With pytous hert and high deuocioun
Right thus to Mars he sayde his oryson
O strong god that in the rygnes colde
Of trace honoured art and lorded y hold
And hast in euery regne and euery lond
Of armes al the byrdel in thy hond
And them fortunest as the list best deuyse
Accept of me my pytous sacrifice
If so be that my thought may deserue
And that my myght be worthy to serue
Thy godhede that I may be one of thy
Than pray I the rewe on my pyne
For that peyn and that hote fyre
In whiche thou brennest whilom for desire
Whan that thou vsedyst the beaute
Of fayre yong fresche venus fre
And haddest her in thy armes at thy wil
And though the ones a tyme myssyl
Whan Vulcanus had caught the in his laas
And fond the liggynge by his wif alas

For thilke sorow that was in thyn hert
 Haue routhe as wele vpon my peynes sme^{rt}
 I am yong and vnkonyng as thou wotest
 And as I trow with loue offended moost
 Than euez was any lyues creatur
 For she that doth me alle this wo endure
 Ne rechet neuer whether I synke or flete
 And wele I wote or she me mercy hete
 I must with strengith wyne hez in the place
 And wele I wote withoute help and grace
 Of the may nat my strenght a bayle
 Than help me lord to morow in my batayle
 For that fyre that whylom brent the
 As wele as that fyre now brenneth me
 And do that I to morow haue the victory
 My the trauayl and thyn be the glory
 Thy souerayn temple wil I moost honouren
 Of any place alwey and moost lauboren
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong
 And in thy temple I wille my baner hong
 And alle the armes of my company
 And euirmore vnto the day I dye
 Stern fyre I wol bifoze the fynde
 And eke to this auowe I wil me bynde
 My berd my here that hangith long a down
 That neuiz yet felt offensioun
 Of rasour ne of shere I wille the yeue
 And be thy true seruaunt whiles I lyue
 Now lord haue routhe vpon my sorowes fore
 yeue me the victory I aske no more
 The prayer stynt of Arcite the strong
 The rynges that on the temple doze hong
 And eke the dozes clatered so fast

The knyghtes Tale

Of whiche arcite som what him agast
The fyres brent vpon the auters bright
That it gan al the temple for to light
A swete smel anone the grounde by pas
And arcite anone his hond by gaf
And more encence in to the fyre cast
With othez rytes mo and at the last
The statue of mars began his haubreke ryng
And with that sounde he herd a murmurynge
ful low and dym and sayd thus. victory
for whiche he gaue to Mars honour and glory
And thus with ioy and hope wile to fare
Arcite anone to his ynne is fare
As fayn as foule is of the bright sonne
And right anone suche stryf is ther begon
for that grauntyng in hebyn aboue
Betwix venus goddesse of loue
And mars the sterne god armepotent
That iupiter was besy it to stynt
Tyl that the pale saturnus the colde
That knew so many of auentures olde
found in his olde experience and arte
That he ful sone hath pleased euery parte
As soth is sayd elde hath grete auantage
In elde is both wisdom and vsage
Men may the olde oute renne but nat oute ride
Saturne anone to stynt stryf and drede
al be it that it is ayenst his kynde
Of al this striue he can remedies fynde
My dere doughter venus quod Saturne
My cours that hath so wyde for to turne
Hath more powez than wote any man
My is the drenchyng of the see so wan

The knyghtes Tale

Myn is the pryson in the derke cote
Myn is the strangeling and hanging by the throte
The murmur and the chorles rebelling
The groynyng and the pryue enpoysonyng
I do vengeaunce and playn correctioun
Whiles I duelle in the signe of the lyon
Myn is the ruyne of the high halles
The falling of the toures and the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpentere
I slough Sampson shakynge the pylar
And myn been the maladies colde
The derke treason and the castes olde
My lokynge is the fadre of pestilence
Now wepe nomore I shal doon diligence
That palamon that is thyn owne knyght
Shal haue his lady as thou him behyght
And Mars shal kepe his knyght yet neuir theles
Betwix you ther must be somtyme pease
Al be ye nat of one complexioun
That causeth alday suche deuysioun
I am thyn al redy at thy wille
Wepe nomore I wil thy lust fulfyllen
Now wil I stynt of the goddes aboue
Of Mars and venus goddesse of loue
And telle you al playnly as I can
The grete effecte for whiche I began
It was the fest in athenes that day
And eke the lusty season of that may
Made euery wight to be in suche plesaunce
That alle that monday iust they and daunce
And spenden it in venus high seruyse
And bicause that they shulden aryse
Erly for to se that grete sight

The knyghtes tale

Unto theire rest went they at nyght
And on the morow whan day gan spring
Of horse and noyse harneys and claterynge
Thez was in hostelryes alle aboute
And to the paleys rode thez many a route
And lordes vpon stedes and palfreys
There mayst thou se a deuy syng of harneys
So vncourthe and so riche and wrought so wele
Of goldsmythrye of brouderie and of stele
The sheldes bright testeres and trappouzes
Golde he wen hermes haubrekes and cote armures
Lordes in paramentes on theiZ coursers
Knyghtes of retenue and eke squyers
Makynge the speres and helmes bokelinge
Gyrdynge of sheldes with keyners lasynge
There as nede is they were nothing ydel
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge. and fast the armerers also
With fylle and hamez pricking to and fro
yemen on fote and compys many one
With shorte staues thicke as they may gone
Pypes trompes naconers and clarions
That in the bataylle blowen bloody soundes
The paleys ful of peple vp and down
There thre there ten holding theiZ questioun
Demynge of the Theban knyghtes two
Some sayde thus som sayd it shalbe so
Som held with him with the blak berd
Som with the balled som with the thicke hered
Som sayde he loked grym and he wold fight
He hath a sparth of vy pounde of wyght
Thus was the halle ful of deuy nyng
Long after that the sonne gan to spring

The knyghtes Tale

They grete Theseus that of his sleep awaked
With mynstralcye and noyse that was made
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche
Tyl that the theban knyghtes bothe pryche
Honoured were and into the paleys fet
Duke Theseus is at the wyndow set
Arayed right as he were god in trone
The peple preceid thider ward ful sone
Him for to seyn and doon high reuerence
And to herkyn his best and his sentence
An herowde on a scaffold made an D
Tyl al the noyse of the peple was do
And whan he saw the peple of noyse all styl
Thus shewed he the myghty dukes wille
The lord hath of his high discrecioun
Considred that it were distructioun
To gentyl blode to fighten in this wise
Of mortal batayle now in this empryse
Wherfore to shapen that they shulde nat dye
He wil his first purpos modifye
Noman therfore on peyne of losse of lyf
No maner shotte ne pollay ne short knyf
In the listes send or thider bring
Ne short swerd for to stike with poynt bityng
Ne noman ne draw ne bere it be his syde
Ne noman shal vnto his felaw ryde
But one cours with a sharp y grounde spere
Tropnyng if him lyst on fote him selue to were
And he that is at myschief shalbe take
And nat slayn but be brought to the stake
That shalbe ordeyned on either syde
But thider he shal by force and there abyde
And if so falle the chrestyn be take

On either syde or elles sleeth his make
 Nolengre shal the turneyng last
 God spede you go forth and ley on fast
 With long swerdes and maces ley on your fylle
 Both now your wey this is the lordes wit
 The voyce of peple touched the heuyng
 So loude cryed they With mery steuyng
 God saue suche a lord that is so gode
 He willith nat distructioun of blode
 Up goth the trumpes and the melody
 And to the listes ridyth this company
 By ordenaunce through out the cyte large
 Hanged with cloth of golde and nat with sarge
 Ful lyke a lord this noble duke gan ryde
 These two Thebans upon either syde
 And after rode the queene and Emely
 And after that a nother company
 Of one and othez after their degre
 And thus they passe through the cyte
 And to the listes come they betyme
 It nas nat of the day fully pryne
 Whan sette was Theseus riche on higg
 Spolita the queene and Emely
 And othez ladies in degrees aboute
 Unto the fetes preseth alle the route
 And westward through the pates vndre marre
 Arcite and eke the houndred of his parte
 With baner rede is entred right anone
 And in that selue moment palamon
 Is vndre venus estward in that place
 With baner white and hardy chere of face
 In al the worlde to seke vp and down
 So euyn withoute any variacioun

The knyghtes Tale

There nere suche companeyes tWey
Foz there was none so wise that coude sey
That any had of othez anauntage
Of worthynesse ne estate ne age
So euyne were they chosen foz to gesse
And in tWoy renges feyre they them dresse
And whan that theire names red were euerichoon
That in theiz nombre gyde were thez none
Tho were the pates shyt and cryed was loude
Do now your deuour pong knyghtes proude
The heroudes left theiz pricking bp and down
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun
Thez is nomoze to sey but est and west
In goth the sperys ful sadly in the rest
In goth the sharpe spore in the syde
Thez seen men who can iust and who can ryde
Thez shpyeryng shaftes bpon sheldes thicke
He feleth through the hart spoon the pryck
Up springeth speres tWenty fote on hight
Out goon the swerdys as the siluez bright
The helmes they to hewen and to shrede
Out brest the blode with sterne stremes rede
With myghty maces the bones they to brist
He through the thickest of the throny can thrist
Thez stomblyn stedys strong and down goth al
He rolleth vndre fote as doth a bal
He fopneth on his feet with his trunchon
And he hurtliith with his hors adoun
He through the body is hurt and sithnes take
Matre his hede and brought to the stake
As for ward was right there he must abyde
A nother led is on that othez syde
And somtyme doth them Theseus to rest

Them for to refreshē and drynke if that they lyst
 ful oft a day haue the Thebans two
 Toggydez y met and wronght eyther wo
 Vnhorsed hath eche one of them twey
 Ther is no tygre in the vale of galegophy
 When that her whelp is stolen when it is lyte
 So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite
 For ielous hert vpon this palamon
 Ne in belmarpe ther is no fel byoun
 That hunted is for angre wood
 Ne of his pray desireth so the blode
 As palamon to sle his foo Arcite
 The ielous strokes on theire helmes byte
 Dute rynneth blood on both theire sydes rede
 Som tyme an end ther is of euery dede
 For oz the sonne vnto rest went
 The strong king Emetrius gan hent
 This palamon as he fought with Arcite
 And made his swerd depe in his fleshe bite
 And by the force of twenty was he take
 Vnyolden and draue to the stake
 And in the rescous of this palamon
 The strong king Ligurte is born a down
 And king Emetrius for ake his strenght
 Is born oute of his sadyl a swerde lenght
 So hit him palamon oz he were take
 But al for noght he was brought to the stake
 His hardy hert ne myght him help noght
 He must abyde whan he was caught
 By force and eke by composicioun
 Who soroweth now but woful palamon
 That must nomore go a pen to fight
 And whan that Theseus hadde seye that fight

The knyghtes Tale

Unto the folke that foughthen thus echone
He cryed than hoo nomore for it is done
I wol be true iuge and nat party
Arcyte of Thebes shal haue Emely
That by his fortune hath her sepr y Wonne
Anone there is a noyse of peple begon
For ioy of this so loude and high with alle
That it semed that the lystes shuld falle
W Hat can now fayre Venus done aboue
 What sayeth she what doth the quene of loue
But wepith so for wantputt of her wille
Tyl that her teres in the listes fylle
She sayd I am shamed doutlesse
Saturne sayd doughter holde thy pease
Mars hath his wille the knyght hath his bone
And by my hede thou shalt be eased sone
The trompettes with the lowde mynstralsye
The heroudes that ful loude yllie and crye
Been in theiir ioy for the wel of dane Arcite
But herk neth me and stynt noyes alite
Whiche a myracle there befelle anone
This spers Arcite hath his helme of done
And on a courser for to she w his face
He pryched endlong the large place
Rohyng bpward bnto this Emely
And she ageyn him cast a frendly eye
And was alle in his chere as in his hert
Dute of the grounde a fyre infernal stert
From Pluto sent at the request of saturne
For whiche his horse for fere gan to turne
And lept a syde and foundred as he lepe
And oz that Arcite may take kepe
He pigth him on the pomel of his hede

That in the place he lay as he were dede
 His brest to brosten with the sadyl bow
 As blake he lay as any cool or crowe
 So was the blode ronne in his face
 Anone he was born oute of the place
 With herte soze to Theseus paleys
 Tho was he coruyn oute of his harnes
 And in a bedde brought ful fayre and blyue
 For he was pet in memory and alpyue
 And alwey cryng after Emely
 Duke Theseus with alle his company
 Is come home to Athenes his cyte
 With alle blis and grete solemnyte
 Al be it that this auenture was falle
 He nolde nat discomforte them alle
 Men sayd eke that Arcite shuld nat dye
 He shulde be hered of his malady
 And of a nother thing they wer sayn
 That of them alle ther was noon slayn
 Alle were they soze hurt and namely one
 That with a spere was thrilled the brest bone
 The othez woundes and the broke armes
 Som had salues and some had charmes
 Fermacyes of herbes and eke sane
 They dronken for they wold thei lyues hane
 For whiche this noble duke as he wel can
 Comforteth and honoured euery man
 And made reuel al the long nyght
 Vnto the straunge lordes as was right
 Ne there was holden no discomfytynge
 But as a iustes or a tourneyng
 For there was holden no discomfiture
 For faylyng nys but auenture

Ne to Beladde By force vnto the stake
 Wyeldyn and With twenty knyghtes take
 One pryson allone withoute mo
 And harped forth by arme fote and too
 And eke his stede dryuen forth With staves
 With fotemen both yemen and eke knaues
 It nas y retted him no vilony
 There may noman clepe it cowardrye
 For whiche anone duke Theseus let crye
 To stynten alle rancouz and enuie
 The degre as wel in one syde as in othez
 And either syde lyke as othez Brothez
 And gaf them giffes after theiz degre
 And fully held a fest daies thre
 And conueyed the kintes Worthylly
 Out of his towne a iourney largely
 And home went euery man the right wey
 There was nomore but far wele haue gode day
 o f this batayle I wil nomore endite
 But speke of palamon and arcite
 Suellith the brest of Arcite and the soze
 Encreseth at his hert ay more and more
 The clotered blode for any lechecraft
 Corruptyth and in his bouke is laft
 That nether veyne blode ne ventusynt
 Ne drinke of herbes may be his helppng
 The vertue expulssyf for anymal
 fro that vertue y cleped natural
 Ne may the benym boyde ne expelle
 The pypes of his longes gan to swelle
 And euery lacerz in his brest adoun
 Is spent With benym and corrupcion
 Him ganneth nothing for to get his lyf

The knyghtes Tale

Dompte by Ward and down Ward layat yf
Al is to bresten thilke regioun
Nature hath in him no domynacioun
And certyanly there nature wil nat wirche
Fare wele phisyke go here the man to the chirche
This is al and som Arcite must dye
Foz whiche he sendith after Emely
And palamon that was his cosyn dere
Than sayd he thus as ye shal after here
Nat may the woful spyret in myn hert
Declare a poynte of al my sorowes smert
To you my lady that I loue moost
But biqueth the seruice of my goost
To you abouen euery creature
Sithnes that my lyf may no lenger dure
Allas the woo allas the peynes strong
That I for you haue suffered and so long
Allas the deth allas my Emely
Allas the departyng of oure company
Allas my hertes quene allas my wif
My hertes lady ender of my lyf
What is this worlde what asketh men to haue
Now with his loue now colde in his graue
Alone withouten any company
Fare wele my swete foo my Emely
And soft take me in your armes tvey
Foz the loue of god and herkeneth what I say
I haue here with my cosyn palamon
Had stryf and rancor many a day agone
Foz loue of you and of my Jelousye
And Jupitez so wisely my soule try
To speken of a seruaunt properly
With circumstaunces alle truly

The knyghtes Tale

That is to seyn trouthe honouꝛ and knyghtehede
Wisdom humbleste estate and high kynred
Freedom and alle that longith to that arte
So Jupitez haue of my soule parte
As in this worlde right now know I none
So worthy to be loued as palamon
That seruyth you and wol do alle his lyf
And if that euir ye shal be a wif
Fozpette th nat Palamon the gentilman
And with that worde his speche fayle gan
Foz fro his fete vnto his brest was come
The colde of dethe that hath him ouercome
And yet more ouer for in his armes two
The bytalle strengith is lost and al ago
Only the intelectys withouten more
That duclyth in his hert syke and sore
Gan fayle whan the herte felith deth
Duffeth his eyen to and fayleth his breth
But on his lady yet cast he his eye
His last worde was mercy Emely
His spyret chaunged the hous and went there
As I cam neuir I can nat telle where
There I stynt I am nat deuynester
Of soules fynde I nat in this regystre
Ne me lyst the opunpons to telle
Of them though they writen where they duelle
Arcyte is colde there mars his soule guy
Now wol I speke forth of Emely
Shryght Emely and owleth palamon
And The seus his suster toke anone
Swonynge and bare her fro the cors a wey
What helpith it to tary forth the day
To telle how she wept both eue and morow

The knyghtes Tale

Foz in suche caas Women haue suche sorow
Whan that their husbondes be fro them goo
That for the moze part they sorowen so
Or elles falle in suche a malady
That at the last certaynly they dye
Infinyte been the sorowes and the teres
Of olde folke and folke of tendre yeres
In al the toun for deth of this Theban
For him thez wepith bothe childe and man
So grete wepyng was thez none certayn
Whan Hector was brought alle freshe y slayn
To troye. alas the pyte that was there
Crachyng of chekes rentyng the of here
Why woldest thou be dede these Wymmen crye
And haddest golde ynough and Emely
No man myght glade Theseus
Saupng his olde fader egeus
That knew this worldes transmutacioun
As he hadde seen it chaunge by and down
Joy after wo and wo after gladnesse
And she wed him ensample and lyknesse
Right as ther deyde neuiz man quod he
That he ne lyued in erth in som degre
Right so thez lyued neuiz man he sayde
In alle this worlde that somtyme he ne deyde
This worlde is but a through fare ful of wo
And we be pylgrames passyng to and fro
Deth is an ende of euery worldes soze
And ouer al this yet sayde he mekyl more
To this effecte ful wisely to enhorste
The peple that they shulde them recomforste
Duke Theseus with alle his besy cure
Cast now where that the sepulture

Of gode Arcite may best y maked be
 And eke moost honourable in his degre
 And at the last he toke conclusioun
 That there first Arcite and palamon
 Hadde for loue the batayle them bitwene
 That in that selue groue swete and grene
 There as he hadde his amorous desires
 His complaynt and for loue his hote fyres
 He wolde make a fyre in whiche the office
 Funeralle he myght fully accomplice
 And comaunded anone to hache and to he W
 The okes olde and ley them on a re W
 In culppys wele araped for to brenne
 His officers with swyft feet they renne
 And ryden anone at his comaundment
 And after this The seus hath sent
 After a bere and he it ouer spradde
 With clothes of golde the richest that he hadde
 And of the same sote he clothed Arcite
 Upon his hondes his gloues white
 And on his hede a crowne of laurez grene
 And in his honde a swerde ful bright and kene
 He layde him bare the visage on the bere
 Ther with he wippte that pyte was to here
 And for the peple sholde se him alle
 Whan it was day he brought him in the halle
 That roreth on the cryng and the soun
 Tho cam this woful theban palamoun
 With flotered berd and rugged as she heres
 In clokes blake dropped al with teres
 And passing othez of wepyng Emely
 The re wfullst of alle the company
 And in a smoch as the seruice shuld be

The knyghtes Tale

The more noble and riche in his dettre
Duke Theseus leet thre stedes forth bring
That trapped were in stele al glytering
And couered with the armes of Arcite
And eke vpon the stedes grete and white
Ther sattyn folke of whiche one bare his shelde
A nother a spere vpon his shulders helde
The thridde bare with him his bow turkeys
Of brend golde was the caas and the harneys
And ryden forth a paas with sorouful chere
Toward the groue as ye shal after here
The noblest of the grekes that there were
Vpon their bakes carpyden the here
With slache paas and eyen rede and wete
Through oute the cyte by the master strete
That spradde was al with blake and wondre hye
Right of the same is the strete y wyre
Vpon the right honde went olde egeus
And on that othez syde duke Theseus
With vesselles of golde in their hond ful fyne
And ful of hony mylke blode and wyne
Eke palamon with ful grete company
And after that cam woful Emely
With fyre in honde as was that tyme the guyse
To do the office of the funeralle seruire
Rygh labour and ful grete apparling
Was at the seruyce of the fyre making
That with his grene toppe the heuyh rought
And twenty fawdom of brede the armes straught
This is to sey the bowes were so brode
Of strawe first was leyde many a lode
But hou the fyre was made vpon an hight
Ne eke the names how the trees hight

The knyghtes Tale

As oke fyrre byrche as the alder holme popule
Maple thorn beche aspe box chester lynch laurel
Wylow elme plane hasel and whypultre
How they were felled shal nat be tolde for me
Ne hou the gotes rennyng by and down
Disperyt of their habitacioun
In whiche they woned in rest and pease
Nymphes faunes and a madrides
Ne hou the bestes and the byrdes alle
Fledde for fere whan the wode gan falle
Ne hou the grounde agast was of the light
That was nat wont to se the sonne bright
Ne hou the fyre was couched first with stre
And than with drye stiches clouen on thre
And than with grene wode and spycery
And than with cloth of golde and with perry
And garlandes hanging with many a floure
The myrre the encence with suete odouze
Ne hou Arcite lay among alle this
Ne what richesse aboute his body ther is
Ne hou that Emely as was the gypse
Put in the fyre of funeralle seruice
Ne hou she swooned whan made was the fyre
Ne what she spake ne what was her de sire
Ne what Jewelles men in the fyre cast
Whan that the fyre was grete and brenned fast
Ne hou som cast their shelde and som their spere
And of their westmentes whiche that they were
And cuppes ful of mylke and blode
In to the fyre that brennt as it were wode
Ne how the grekes with an hute route
Thryes ryden al the fyre aboute
Upon the left honde with an high showtyng

The knyghtes Tale

And thryes With theire speres clatering
And thryes hou the ladies gan cry
Ne hou that led Was homward Emely
Ne hou Arcite is Brent to assen celde
Ne hou the lyches Wakes Were y holde
That ilke nyght ne how the grekes pley
The Wake pleyes ne hepe I nat to say
Whiche Wrastelith best naked With oyle anoynt
Ne Who that bare him best at the poynt
I wil nat telle alle how they goon
Home to Athenes When the play is doon
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende
And make of my long tale an ende

 y proesse and by length of certayn yeres
B At stynt is the moornyng and the cheres
Of grekes by one generalle assent
Than semeth me ther Was a parlement
At Athenes vpon a certayn poynthe and caas
And among the which poyntes spoken Was
To haue With certayn countrees alpaunce
And haue fully of Thebans obeysaunce
For whiche this noble Theseus anon
Let send after gentyl palamon
Unwyst of him what Was the cause and why
But in his blake clothes soroufully
He cam at his comaundement an hye
Tho Theseus sent for Emely
Whan they were set and hyst Was alle the place
And Theseus abyden hath a space
Or any worde cam fro his wise brest
His eyen set he there as him lyst
And With a sadde visage he sithed styll
And after that right thus he sayd his wyll

The Knyghtes Tale

The first mouer of the cause aboue
Whan he first made the fayre cheyne of loue
Grete was the effecte and high was his entent
Wele wist he why and what therof he ment
Foz with that fayre cheyne of loue he bond
The fyre the eyre the water and the lond
In certayn bondes that may nat fle
The same prynce and that mouer quod he
Hath stabliffhed in this wreched world adoun
Certayn daies and duracioun
To alle that is engendred in this place
Duez the whiche day they may nat passe
Al may they yet tho daies abrigge
Thez nedith nat auctozpte to legge
Foz it is proued by experience
But that me lyst to declare my sentence
Than may wele men by this ordre discerne
That thylke mouer stable is and eterne
Wel may men know but it be a fool
That euery party is deryued fro his hole
Foz nature hath nat take his begynnynge
Of one part oz of a cantel of a thing
But of a thing that parfyte is and stable
Descending so tyl it be corumpable
And therfore for his wise purueaunce
He hath so wile be sette his ordenaunce
That speses of thinges and progeffiouns
Sholden endure by successiouns
And nat eterne withoute any lye
This mayst thou vnderstonde and se at eye
To the oke that hath so long a nozysshing
Fro the tyme that it first gynueth to spring
And hath so long lye as ye may see

yet at the laste wasted is the tre
 Considreth eke hou the hard stoon
 Dure our feet on whiche we tradde and goon
 yet wastith it as it lieth by the wey
 The brode ryuer somtym weyith drey
 The grete towne se we wane and wende
 Than ye se that alle thing hath an ende
 Of man and woman se we wele also
 That nedes in one of these termes two
 This is to sayn in youthe or elles in age
 He moot be dede the king as shal a page
 Som in his bedde som in the depe see
 Som in the large feld as men nay se
 Ther helpith naught for alle goon that ilke wey
 Than may I say alle thing mot nedes depe
 What maketh this but Jupiter the king
 That is prince and cause of al thing
 Conuertynge al vnto his propre wille
 For whiche it is derpyed soth to telle
 And here agaynes no creature alpye
 Of no degre auayleth for to stryue
 Than it is wisdom as thinketh me
 To make vertue of necessite
 And take it wele that we may nat esche we
 And nameky that to vs alle is due
 And who so grutchithought he doth foly
 And rebel is to him that al may gre
 And certaynly a man hath moost honoure
 To dyen in his moost excellent flour
 Whan he is spker of his gode name
 Than hath he do his frende ne him no shame
 And gladder oughth his frende be of his de th
 Whan with honou so by yolden is his bre th

The Kyghtes Tale

Than whan his name appalled is for aȝe
for alle forȝeten is than his basselage
Than is it best as for a worthy fame
Todyen whan a man is best of name
The contrary for alle this is wilfulnes
Why gruge we why haue we heuynesse
That gode Arcite of cheualry the flouz
Departed is with duety and honour
Dute of the foule pryson of this lyf
Why gruched his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welefare that loueth him so wele
Can he them thanke nay god woot neuiz a dese
That bothe his soule and eke them offendee
And yet they may theiſ lustes nat amende
What may I conclude of this long serȝ
But after wo I rede vs be mery
And thanke Jupitez of alle his grace
And oz we departen from this place
I rede that we make ef sorowes two
D parſyte ioy lastyng euirmo
And loketh now where moost sorow is punne
There wil I first amende and begynne
Suster quod he this is my ful assent
With alle the auyse of my parlement;
That gentyl palamon your owyn knyght
That serueth you with hert and myght
And euiz hath do sithen ye first him knew
That ye shal of your grace on him rewe
And take him for husbond and for lorde
Pene ne your hond for this is oure accorde
Let see now of your womanly pyte
He is a kynges brother sonne parde
And though he were a poure bachelez

The Knyghtes Tale

Sithen he hath serued you so many a yere
And hadde for you so grete aduersite
It must be considred leuyth me
For gentyl mercy ought to passe right
Than sayd he thus to palamon the knyght
I trow thez nedith litel sermonyng
To make you assent to this thing
Cometh nere and take your lady by the honde
And thus of them bothe was made the bond
That hight matromonye or mariage
By alle the counseyl of the baronage
And thus with alle blisse and melody
Hath palamon wedded Emely
And god that alle this worlde hath wrought
Sente him his loue that dere hadde bought
For now is palamon in al wele
Lypung in blisse in richesse and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tenderly
And he her serneth agayn so gentyllly
That thez was no worde them bitwene
Of jelousy or of any othez tene
Thus endith palamon and Emely
And god saue alle this company

Here endith the knyghtes tale
And here begynneth the Myllers prologue

W Han that the knyght had thus his tale tolde
In alle the company nas there yong ne olde
That he ne sayd it was a noble story
And worthy to be drawe in memory
And namely the gentylls euerichone
Dure hoost lough and swore so mot I gone

The Myllers Prologue

This goth aright vnbokeled is the male
Let se now who shal tel another tale
For truly the game is wele begonne
Now telle ye sif monke if that ye honne
Somwhat to quyte the knyght his tale
The Myller that for dronken was al pale
To that vnnethe spon his horse he sat
He nolde auale nother hode ne hat
Ne abyde noman for his curtesy
But in pylates boyce he gan to cry
And swore by armes blode and bones
I can a noble tale for the nones
With whiche I wol now quyte the knyghtes tale
Dure hoost saw that he was dronke of ale
And sayde abyde Robyn leue Brothel
Som better man shal telle first another
Abyde and let vs werke thryftely
By cokkes soule quod he that nyl nat I
For I wil speke oz elles go my wey
Dure hoost aunswerd telle on a deuyt wey
Thou art a fool thy wyt is ouercome
Now herk neth quod the Myller alle and some
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke I knowe by my soun
And therfore if I mys speke oz sey
Wyte it the ale of Suthwerke I you pray
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf
How that a clerke hath set the wrightes cappe
The reue aunswerd and sayd stynt thy clappe
Let be thy lewde dronkyn harlotrye
It is a synne and eke grete foly
To appeyre any man oz him de fame

And eke bring wyues in suche name
 Thou mayst ynough of othez thinges sayn
 This dronken Myllers spake ful sone ageyn
 And sayd o leue brothez I wolde
 Who hath no wif he is no cohercolde
 But I say nat therfore that thou art one
 There been gode wyues many one
 Why art thou angry with my tale now
 I haue a wif parde as wele as thou
 yet nolde I nat for the oxen in my plow
 Take vpon me more than ynow
 As deme of my selue that I were one
 I wol beleue wele that I am none
 An husbonde shulde nat be inqysityf
 Of goddes pryuyte ne of his wif
 So he may fynde goddes fuson there
 Of the remenaunt nedith nat to enquere
 What sholde I more say but this myllere
 He nolde his wordes for no man forbere
 But tolde his chorles tale in this manere
 Me at thinketh that I shal reherse it here
 And therfore euezy gentyll wight I pray
 Demeth nat for goddes loue that I say
 Of feyrlentent but that I must reherce
 Theiz talcs al be they bettre or werce
 Or elles falsen som of my mateze
 And therfore who solystith nat to here
 Turne ouer the leef and chese a nother tale
 For he shal fynde ynow both grette and smale
 Of histozyalle thing that towcheth gentyllnesse
 And eke moralite and holynesse
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys
 The Myllers is a chorle ye knaw wile this

The Myllers Prologue

So is the reue and eke other mo
And harlotrye they tolde bothe t wo
Auyseth you and put me oute of blame
And eke men shal nat make earnest of game

Here betynneth the myllers tale



W **hilom** ther was duelling in Dvenforde
A riche gnof that gastes hadde to borde
And of his craft was he a carpentre
With him ther was a poure scoler
Had lerned art but al his fantesye
Was turned to lere astrologye
And coude a certayn of conclusiouns
To demyn by interzogaçiouns
If that men asked him certeyn houres
Whether they shuld haue drought or shoures
Or if that men asked him what shulde befall
Of euery thing I may nat rehen alle

This clerke was cleped hend nycolas
 Of derne loue he coude and of solas
 And thereto he was fry and ful pryue
 And lyke a mayden meke for to see
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
 Alone with oute any company
 Ful fetously y dight with herbes sote
 And he him selue was swete as is the rote
 Of lycorpece or of any cete wale
 His almegeest his bokes grete and smale
 His astrologye longyng for his arte
 His augrym stones ley fayre a part
 On shelues couched at his beddes hed
 His presse y couered with a folding rede
 And alle aboue ther lay a gay sawtrye
 On whiche he made anyghtes melodye
 So swetely that al the chambre rong
 And Angelus ad birgynem he song
 And after that he song the kyniges note
 Ful often blissed was his mery throte
 And this swete clerke his tyme spent
 After his frendes syndyng and his rent
 This carpentre hadde wedded new a wif
 Whiche that he loued more than his lyf
 Of xviii yere she was of age
 Jelous he was and held her narrow in cage
 For she was wylde and yong and he was olde
 And demed him selue lyke to be a cokocolde
 He knew nat caton for his wyt was rude
 That badde a man wed his symylitude
 Men sholde wedde after their estate
 For youth and age been often at debate
 But sithen he was fallen in the snare

The Myllers Tale

He must endure as other folke his care
Fayre was his yong wif and therewithalle
As any wessel her body gent and smalle
A seynt she wered barred alle of silke
A barme cloth as white as morow mylke
Upon her lendes with fulle many a goze
White was her smoke and broden alle bifore
And eke behinde on her coler aboute
Of coleblake sylke within and eke withoute
The tapettes of her white volupez
Were of the same sute of the coler
Her fylet brode of silke and set ful hie
And sikerly she hadde a likerous eye
Ful smale y pulled were her browes two
And they were bent and blake as any stoo
She was moche more blisful on to se
Than is the newe pere genet tre
And softer than is the wolle of the wedez
And by her gyrdel hangtth a purs of ledez
Tarsalet with silke and perled with laton
In alle this worlde to seke by and down
There is noman so wise that coude thinche
So gay a pupelot or so praty a wynche
Fulle brightez was she shynnyng of her hue
Than in the toure the noble forged new
But of her song it was as loude and yery
As any swalow sittynge in the bery
Therto she coude shippe and make game
As any hydde or calf folowynge his dame
Her mouthe was swete as brattet or meth
Or horde of apelles leyde on the hay or heth
Wynsynge she was as is a ioly colt
Yong as a mast and by right as a bolt

The Myllers Tale

A broche she bare vpon her low coler
As brode as is the boos of a bokeleer
Her shoen were laced on her legges hye
She was a prymerolle a pygges nye
For any lord to liggyn in his bed
Or yet for any gode yeman to wedde
Now syre and est syre so be fel the caas
That on a day this hend Nicholas
Fyl with this yong wyf to rage and to pley
Whyles that her husbond was at Dseney
As clerkes be ful subtel and ful queynte
And pryuelly he caught her by the queynte
And sayd y wys but if I haue my wille
For dery loue of the lemman I spyl
And held her hard by the shanke bones
And sayd lemman loue me alle at ones
Or I wol dye al so god me saue
And she sprong as a colt doth in the traue
And with her hede she wrieth fast a wey
She sayde I wol nat kyssse the by my fay
Why let be quod she let be Nicholas
Or I wol cry oute harrow and allas
Do wey your hondes for your curtesy
This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry
And spake so fayre and profered her so fast
That she her loue graunted him at the last
And swore her othe by seint Thomas of kent
That she wolde be at his comaundement
Whan that she may her leyser wele espye
My husbond is so ful of ielousye
That but ye wayte wele and be pryue
I wote right wele I nam but dede quod she
Ye must be ful dery as in this caas

The Myllers Tale

May therof care the nat quod Nicholas
Pytherly a clerke hath besed his while
But if he coude a Carpenter begyle
And thus they been accorded and y sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue tolde biforn
Whan Nicholas hadde do thus euerydele
And thacked her aboute the lends wele
He kyfte her swete and toke his sawtrye
And pleyed fast and made melodye
Than fel it thus that to the parisshe chirche
Cristes own werkes for to wyrche
This gode wif went on an holy day
Her forhede shone as bright as ony day
So was it wasshe whan she leet her werke
Now was of the chirche a parisshe clerke
The whiche that was y cleped Absolon
Cruelled was his here and as the golde it shone
And strutted as a fan large ant brode
Ful streight and euyh lay his ioly shode
His rode was rede his eyen gray as goos
With powles wyndowes coruen in his shoes
In hoses rede he went fulle fetoufly
y cladde he was ful smalle and feioufly
Alle in a byrtel of a light waget
Ful fayre and thicke by the popntes set
And therupon he hadde a gay surplice
As white as is the blossom on the ryse
A mery childe he was so god me saue
Wele coude he leten blode and clippe and shaue
And make a charter of lond and a quictaunce
In t wenty maners coude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Wyenford tho
And with his legges cast to and fro

The Myllers Tale

And pley songes on a smalle rebyble
Therto he song somtyme a loude quynnyble
And as wele coude he pley on his gyttern
In alle the toun nas brewe house no tauern
That he ne bisited with his solace
There as any gayland tapster was
But soth to sey he was somdele sheweymous
Of fartynge and of speche daungerous
This absolon that iolyf was and gay
Goth with a censoure on the holyday
Sensynge the wyues of the parysshe fast
And many a louely loke on them he cast
And namely on this carpenters wyf
To loke on her him thought a mery lyf
She was so proppyz swete and eke lytherous
I dar wele say if she hadde be a mous
And he a cat he wolde her hent anone
This parisshe clerke this iolyf absolon
Hath in his hert suche a loue longynge
That of no wif toke he non offring
For curtesy he sayde he wolde non
The mone whan it was nyght bright shone
And absolon his gyttern hadde y take
For paramours he thought for to wake
And forth he goth iolyf and amerous
Tyl he cam to the carpenters house
A litel after cockes hadde y crowe
And dressed him vp by the shot wyndowe
That was vpon the carpenters walle
He singith in his boyce gentyl and smalle
Now dere lady if thy wyl be
I pray you that ye wil thinke on me
ful wele accordyng to his gytternge

The Myllers Tale

This carpenter awoke and herde him sing
And spake vnto his wif and sayde anon
What alyson herist thou nat absolon
That chaunteth thus vndre oure boures walle
And she aunswerd her husband therwith alle
yes god woot John I here it euerydele
This passith forth what wille ye but than wele
From day to day this ioly absolon
So wolweth her that he is wo begoon
He wakith alle the nyght and alle the day
He kempt his lockes brode and made them gay
He wolweth her by meanes and brocage
And swoze he wolde be her own page
He syngeth broelyng as a nyghtyngale
He sent after piment meth and spiced ale
And wafres pppynghote of the gleden
And for she was of toun he profered mede
For som folke wol bye women for richesse
And som for strokes and som for iolynesse
Som tyme he shewith his lustynes and mastyre
He pleyeth herodes vpon a scaffolt hye
But what auayleth him as in this caas
So loued so this hend Nicholas
That absolon may blow the buckes horn
He ne hadde for his laboure but a scorn
And thus she maketh of absolon her ape
And al his earnest turneth tyl a jape
ful soth is this prouerbe it is no lye
Men say right thus alwey the nyght slye
Maketh the fer leef for to be lothe
For though that absolon be wood or wrothe
Bicause that he fer was from her sight
This nyght Nicholas stode in his light

The Myllers Tale

Now here the wele thou hende Nicholas
For absolone may wayle and syng allas
And so befel it that on a saturday
This carpenter was goon tyl D seney
And eke hend Nicholas and alyson
Accorded be fully to this conclusioun
That Nicholas shal shapen hem a wyle
This sely ielous husbond to begyle
And if so be the game went a right
She sholde slepe in his armes alle nyght
For this was her desire and his also
And right anone withoute wordes mo
This nycolas nolentez wclde tary
But doth fulle soft in to his chambre carye
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or twey
And to her husbond badde her for to sey
If that he asked after Nicholas
She shold say she ny st where he was
Of alle that day she saw him nat with eye
She troweth that he is in som maladye
For that no crye her mayde coude him calle
He nolde aunswer for nothing myght falle
This passith forth alle the saturday
That nycolas styll in his chambre ley
And ete and slepe oz dyd what him lyst
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to rest
This sely carpenter hath grete meruayle
Of nycolas oz what myght him ayle
And sayd I am adradde by seynt Thomas
It stondith nat a right with Nicholas
God sheld it that he dyed sodenly
This worlde is now fulle tykel sypherly
I sawe a corps to day bore to the chirche

That now on monday last I saue him wirche
 Go by quod he vnto his knaue anone
 Crepe at the doze and knoche with a stone
 Poke how it is and telle me boldly
 This kuaue goth by ful sturdely
 And at the chambre doze while that he stode
 He cryed and knocked as he were wood
 What how what do ye master Nicholay
 How may ye slepen al the long day
 But alle for naught he herd nat a worde
 An hool ful low he fond vpon a bord
 There as the cat was wont in for to crepe
 And at the hole he lohed in ful depe
 Tyl at the last he hadde of him a sight
 This nycolas sat gaping euil by right
 As he hadde kyked on the new mone
 Adoun he goth and tolde his master sone
 In what aray he saue this ilke man
 This carpenter to blisse him began
 And sayd help vs seint frides wyde
 A man wote lytel what him shal betyde
 This man is fallen with his astronomy
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye
 I thought ay wele how it sholde be
 Men sholde nat know of goddes pryuyte
 y blessed be alwey a lewde man
 That naught but only his beleue can
 So ferd another clerke with astronomy
 He walked in the felde for to pryde
 Vpon the sterres what ther sholde befall
 Tyl he was in a marlepit y falle
 He saue nat. but yet by seint Thomas
 We rewith sore of hend Nicholas

The Myllers Tale

He shalbe rated of his studiyng
If that I may by iesu heuyng king
Gete me a staf that I may vnder spore
While that thou Robyn heuyst of the doze
He shalle oute of his studiyng as I gesse
And to the chambre doze he gan him dresse
His knaue was a strong chozle for the nones
And by the haspe he haf it vp at onys
In to the floze the doze fel anone
This nycolas sat ay as styll as stone
And euiz gaped by ward in the eyre
This carpentere wende that he were in dispeyre
And hent him by the shulders myghtyly
And shoke him harde and cryed spetously
What nycolay what how loke a down
Awake and thinke on cristes passioun
I crouche the fro eluys and fro wightes
Therwith the nyghtspel sayde he anone righetes
On foure haluys on the house aboute
And on the thre ssholde of the doze withoute
Jesu crist and seint benedight
Blysse this house from euery wicked wight
For nyghtes berry the wight pater noster
Where wonest thou seynt petyrs sustre
And at the last this hende nycolas
Gan for to sigh soze and sayde allas
Shal alle this worlde be loste est sones now
This carpentez aunswerd what sayest thou
What thinke on god as we do men that swynke
This nycolas aunswerd fette me drynke
And after wil I speke to the in pryuate
Of certayn thinges that touchen me and the
I wil it telle none othoz man certayn

The Myllers Tale

This carpentere goth down and cometh atteyn
And brought of myghty ale a large quarte
And when eche of them hadde dronke his part
This nycolas his doze faste shette
And down the carpentez be him he set
He sayd John myn hoost leef and dere
Thou shalt vpon thy trouthe swere me here
That to no wight thou shalt this counsel wrey
For it is cristes counseyl that I sey
And if thou telle it man thou art forloze
For this vengeance thou shalt haue therfore
That if thou wrey it man thou shalt be wode
Nay crist forbede it for his verzy blode
Quod tho this sely man I am no blabbe
Ne though I say I am nat leef to gabbe
Say what thou wilt I shal it neuiz telle
To childe ne wif be him that harwed helle
Now John quod nycolas I wil nat lye
I haue founde it in myn astrologye
As I haue looked in the mone bright
That now a monday next a quartyr nyght
Shal fal a rayn and that so wilde and wode
That half so grete was neuiz noes flode
This worlde he sayde in lesse than an houre
Shal alle be dreynt so hydous is the shoure
Thus shal mankynd drenche and lese their lyf
This carpentere aunswerd allas my wyf
And shal she drenche allas my alifoun
For sorow of this he felle almoost a down
And sayd is ther no remedy in this caas
Why yes for god quod hend Nycolas
If thou wilt worke after loze and rede
Thou mayst nat worke after thy own hede

The Myllers Tale

For thus sayeth Salamon that was ful trewe
Worke alle by counseyll and thou shalt nat rewe
And if thou worke wylt by gode counseyll
I vnder take withouten mast or sayle
yet shal I haue her and the and me
Hast thou nat herd hou saued was Noe
Whan that oure lord hadde warned him bifore
That al the worlde with water sholde be loyn
yes quod this carpentere ful yore ago
Thou hast nat herd quod nycholas also
The sorow of noe with his felawship
Or that he myght get his wif to ship
Him hadde beleue I dar wele vnder take
At that tyme than alle his wedders blake
That she had hadde a ship her selue alone
And therfore wotest thou what is best to done
This asketh hast and of an hasty thing
Men may nat preche ne make tariyng
Anon go get vs fast into this Junne
A knedding trough or elles a hymelyn
For eche of vs but loke that they be large
In whiche we may swymmen as in a barge
And haue therin bytaile suffisaunt
But for one day fy on the remanaunt
The water shal a flake and go a wey
Aboute pryme vpon the next day
But Robyn may nat wyt on this thy knaue
Ne eke thy mayden gyfte I may nat saue
Aske nat why for though thou aske me
I wyl nat telle goddes pryuate
It suffiseth the but if thy wyt be madde
To haue as grete a grace as Noe hadde
Thy wif shal I wele saue oute of doute

The Myllers Tale

Go now thy way and spede the here aboute
But whan thou hast for the and her and me
ygoten vs thies knedding tubbes thre
Than shalt thou hong them in the roof ful hye
That noman of oure purueaunce espye
And whan thou thus hast done as I haue seyde
And hast oure bytaye fayre in them y leyde
Ande eke an aye to smyte the corde a two
Whan that the water cometh that we may go
And breke an hole an high vpon the gable
In to the gardeyn ward ouer the stable
That we may frely passe forth oure way
Whan that the grete shoure is passed a way
Than shal we swymme as merely I vndertake
As doth the white doke after the drake
Than wol I clepe how alison how John
Be mery for the flode wil passe anone
And thou wilt sey hayle mayster Nicholay
Gode morow I se the wele for it is day
And than shal we be lordes alle oure lyue
Of alle the worlde as noe and his wif
But of o thing I warne the fulle right
Be wele auyseid on that ilke nyght
Whan we be entred into the shippe bord
That one of vs ne speke nat a word
Ne clepe ne cry but be in his prayez
For it is goddes owne hest dere
Thy wif and thou must hang fer a twynne
For that betwixt you tway shal be no synne
No more in lohyng than there shal in dede
This ordenaunce is sayde go god the spede
Tomorow at nyght when folke be alle a slepe
Into oure knedding tubbes wyl we crepe

And sittyn there abyding goddes grace
 Go now thy wey I haue no lenger space
 To make of this no lenger sermonyng
 Men say thus send the wise and say no thing
 Thou art so wise it nedith the nat to tesse
 God saue our lyf and that I the besече
 This sely carpentere goth forth his wey
 Ful ofte he sayd allas and wela wey
 But to his wif he tolde his pryuyte
 And she was ware and kne we it bet than he
 What alle this queynt cast was for to sey
 But nathelesse she ferd as she wolde dey
 And sayd allas go forth thy wey anone
 Help vs to scape or we be dede echoon
 I am thy true berry wedded wif
 Go dere spouse and helpe to saue oure lyf
 No whiche a gret thing is affectioun
 Men may dye alday of ymaginacioun
 So depe may impressioun be take
 This sely carpentere begynneth quake
 Him thinketh verily that he may se
 Noyes flode come walowing as the see
 To drenchen alisoun his hony dere
 He wepith waleth and maketh sozr there
 He syghed with may a sozr swough
 He goth and getteth him a knedding trough
 And after that a tub and a hemelyn
 And pryuelly he sent them to his Inne
 And hange them in the rose in pryuate
 His own hond he made ledders thre
 To clymbyn by the rences and the stalkes
 In to the tubbes hanging in the balkes
 And then vitayleth both trough and tubbe

The Myllers Tale

With brede and chese and gode ale in a bus
Suffisyng right ynow as for one day
But or he hadde made alle that araye
He sent his knave and eke his wenche also
Upon his erond to london for to go
And on the monday whan it drew to nyght
He shytted his doore withoute candel light
And dressed al thing as it sholde be
And shortly by theyr comyn alle thre
They sytten styl wele a furlong wey
Now pater noster cum sayd Nicholay
And cum sayde John and cum sayd alyson
This carpenter sayd his deuocioun
And styll he sittyth and byddith his prayer
Awaiting on the rayn if he it here
The dede sleepe for very besynesse
Fyl on this Carpenter right as I gesse
Aboute curfue tyme or lytel more
For trauayl of his goost he troneth sore
And eft he rowtyth for his hede mys lay
Down of the leddez stalketh nytholay
And alison ful soft down she spedde
Withoute wordes mo they go to the bedde
There as the carpenter was wont to lye
There was the reuel and the melodye
And thus lieth alison and Nicholas
In besynesse of myrth and in solas
Tyl that the belle of laudes gan to ryng
And freres in the chauncel gan to syng
This parisshe clerke this amerous Absolon
That is for loue alwey so wo begon
Upon the monday was at Dseney
With company him to disporte and pley

The Myllers Tale

And asked bpon a caas a cloysterez
ful pryuelly after Johan the Carpentere
And he drew him a parte oute of the chyrche
And sayde I not I saw him nat wyrche
Sithen saturday I trow that he be went
for tymber there our abbot hath him sent
for he is wont for tymber for to go
And duelle at the graunte a day or two
Or elles he is at his house certeyn
where that he be I can nat sothly sayn
This absolon ful ioly was and light
And thought now is tyme to wake al nyght
for spherly I saw him nat steriing
Aboute his doze sithen day gan to spring
So moot I thryue I shalke or cockes crowe
Pryuelly knocken at his wyndow
That stont ful low bpon his boures wal
To Alisoun now wil I tellen alle
My loue longiing for yet I shal nat mys
That at the leest wey I shal her kyss
Som maner comforte shal I haue parfay
My mouthe hath itched alle the long day
That is a signe of kyssing at the leest
Al nyght eke me mette I was at a feest
Therefore I wyl go slepe an oure or twey
And alle the nyght than wil I walke and pley
whan that the first cocke hath crowe ano
Up riseth this ioly louer Absolon
And him arrayeth gay at popnt deuyse
But first he che with grayn and lycorpe
To smellen swete or he hadde hempt his here
Vndre his tong a true loue he bere
for therby went he to haue be gracious

The Myllers Tale

He rometh to the Carpenters house
And styl he stont vndre the shot wyndow
Vnto his brest it raught it was so low
And soft he colheth with a semysoun
What do ye honycombe swete alyfoun
My fayre byrde my suete synanome
Awaketh lemman myn and speke tome
Ful lytel thinke ye vpon my wo
That for your loue I swete there I go
No wondre is though I swelt and swete
I morne as doth a lambe after the tete
I wys lemman I haue suche loue longint
That lyke a turtyl true is my moznynng
I may nat ete no more than a mayde
Go fro the wyndow iache fool she sayde
As helpe me god it wol nat be combame
I loue a nother and elles I were to blame
Wele bet than the by Jesu absolone
Go forth thy wey or I wil throwe a stone
And let me slepe a twenty deuyll way
Alas quod absolon and wele a wey
That true loue was euiz so euyl beset
Than kyss me sithen it may be no bet
For iesus loue and for the loue of me
Wylt thou than go thy wey therwith quod she
ye certis lemman quod this absolon
Than make the redy quod she I come anone
And vnto Nicholas she sayde styll
Now pease and thou shalt laugh thy fylle
This absolon down set him on his knees
And sayde I am a lord at alle degrees
For after this I hope ther cometh more
Lemman thy grace and swete byrd thy n ore

The Myllers Tale

The Wyndowes she vndoth and that in hast
Haue do quod she com and spede the fast
Lest that oure nyghboures the aspye
This absolon gan Wype his mouth fulle dry
Derhe was the nyght as pyche or cool
And at the Wyndow she put oute her hole
And absolon ne felt ne bet ne wers
But with his mouth he kyst her ers
Fulle sauerly or he were ware of this
A bak he stert and thought it was a mys
For wele wist he a woman hadde no berd
He felt a thing alle rough and long hered
And sayd fy allas what haue I do
The quod she and clapped the Wyndow to
And absolon goth forth a soyr paas
A berd a berd sayde hend Nicholas
By goddes corpus this goth fayre and wele
This sely absolon herd euery dele
And on his lippe he gan for angre byte
And to him selue he sayde I shal the quyte
Who rubbyth now who frotyth now his lippes
With dust with cloth with sond with chippes
But absolon that sayeth ful ofte allas
My soule betake I sayde he to sathanas
But me leuyr and alte this toun quod he
On this despyte a wroken for to be
Alas quod he allas that I ne hadde blent
His hote loue was colde and alle queynt
For fro that tyme that he hadde kyst her ars
Of paramours set he nat a carse
For he was heled of his maladye
And oft paramours gan he diffye
And wept as doth a childe that is bete

The Myllers Tale

A soft paas he went him ouer the strete
 Vnto a Smyth men called dane gerueys
 That in his forge smyteth plow harneys
 He sharpith the share and the cultre beside
 This absolon knocketh alle easely
 And sayd vnto geruays and that anon
 What who art thou. it am I absolon
 What absolon what cristes swete tre
 Why ryse ye so rathe. ey benedicite
 What ayleth you som gay gyrl god it woot
 Hath brought you thus vpon the verytote
 By seynt Note ye wote what I mene
 This absolon rougth nat a bene
 Of alle this pley apen no word he yaf
 He hadde wele more thought on his distaf
 Than geruays knewe and seyde frend so dere
 That hote cultre in the chymney here
 Aslene it me I haue therewith to done
 I wol bringe it the ateyn fulle sone
 Geruays aunswerd certys were it golde
 Or in a poke nobles alle vntolde
 Thou sholdest it haue as I am true smyth
 By cristes fote what wol ye do therewith
 Therfore quod Absolon be as he may
 I shalle it telle the to morow or day
 And caught the cultre by the colde stele
 Fulle softe oute of the doze he gan stele
 And wente vnto the carpenters walle
 He coughed first and knocketh therewith alle
 Vpon the wyndow right as he dyd ere
 This alyfoun aunswerd who is there
 That knockith so I warraunt it a theef
 Why nay quod he god wote my swete leef

By fore / emp / ana / Swithas / que / are / que / sit / it
 & gho / in / Si / an / it / Swithas / palas

The Myllers Tale

I am absolou thy nown derling
Of golde quod he I haue the brought a ryng
My moder yaued it me so god me saue
Fulle fyne it is and therto wile y graue
This wyl I gyue the if thou me kysse
This Nicholas was ryfen for to pyssse
And thought he wolde amende alle the iape
He sholde kysse his ers or that he scape
And by the wyndow dyd he hastely
And oute his ers he putyth pryuelly
Ouer the buttocke of the shanke bone
And therewith spake this clerke absolou
Speke swete byrde I not where thou art
This Nicholas anone let fle a fart
As grete as it hadde been a thondre dynt
That with the stroke he was almoost y blynt
And he was redy with his iron hote
And nycolas amynd the ers he smote
Of goth the shynne an hande brede aboute
The hote culcre brende so his toute
And for the smert he wend for to dye
As he were wode for wo he gan to crye
Help water water help for goddes hert
This carpentere oute of his slombre stert
And herd one cry water as he were wode
And thought allas now cometh the flode
He set him by withoute wordes mo
And with his axe he smote the corde a two
And down goth alle he sonde neyther to selle
Ne brede ne ale tyl he cam to the selle
Upon the floze and there as woun he lay
Up stert hez alyson and nycolare
And cryed oute harow in the strete

The Myllers Tale

The nyghboures both smale and grete
In ronnyng for to ga Wryn on this man
That yet as won lay both pale and wan
For with the falle brost he hath his arme
But stond he must vnto his owen harme
For whan he spake he was anone boyn down
With hende nytholas and alifoun
They tolde euery man that he was wode
So he was agast of noes flood
Through fantaspe and of his banpte
He hadde bought him knedding tubbes thre
And hadde them hanged in the roof aboue
And that he prayed them for goddes loue
To sitten in the roof par company
The folke gan laughen at his fante sy
In to the roof they hyn and they gape
And turned alle his harm to a iape
For whatso euiz this carpenterz aunswerd
It was for naught noman his reson herd
With othes grete he was swoze a douyn
That he was holde wode in alle the toun
For euery clerke right anon helde with othez
They sayd the man was wode my leef brother
And euery wight gan laugh at his stryf
Thus swyued was the carpenters wif
For alle his hepyng and alle his ielousy
And absolou hath byssed her neyther eye
And nytholas is scalded in the toute
This tale is done and god saue alle the route

Here endith the Myllers Tale
And here betynneth the reues prologue

The Reues Prologue

W Whan folke hadde laughten at this nyce caas
 Of absolon and of hende nycholas
Dyuerse folke diuersely thy sayden
But for the more part they lough and pleyden
Ne at this tale I sa we noman him greue
But if it were only Of walde the Reue
Bicause he was of carpenters craft
A lytel Ire ther is in his hert there last
He gan to grutche and blame it a lyte
Sy thee quod he ful wele I coude the quyte
With bleryng of a proude myllers eye
If that me lyst to speke of rebaudrye
But I am olde me lyst nat pley for atte
Gras tyme is done my fodre is now foratte
This white top writeth my olde peres
Myn hert also moulyd is as my here is
But yet I fare as doth an open ers
For that ilke frute is euez lengre the wers
Tyl it be rotyn in mulloke or in stre
We olde men I drede so faren we
Tyl we be rotyn can we nat be rype
We hopen alwey while the worlde wil pype
For in oure wille ther stekith euz a nayle
To haue an hore hede and a grene tayle
As hath a leeke for though oure myght be gone
Dure wil desireth foly euz in one
For whan we may do naught than wille we speken
yet in oure assen olde fyre is rekyng
Foure gledes haue we whiche I shalle deuyse
Quauntyng lipng angre and couetyse
These foure sparkles longith vnto elde
Dure oldelymes may we nat be welde
But wil ne shal nat fayle that is soth :

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The Reues Prologue

And yet I haue alwey a coltes tothe
As many a yere as it was passed henne
Sithen that my tappe of lyf began to renne
Foz spherly whan I was born anone
Deth drew the tappe of lyf and lete it gone
And euiz sithen hath so the tappe ronne
Tyl that almoost al empty is the tonne
The streame of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe
The sely tunte may wele ryng and chymbe
Of wrechidnesse that past is ful yore
With olde folke saue dotage there is no more
Whan that oure hoost hadde herd this sermonyng
Began to speken as lordly as a king
And sayd what amounteth al this wytte
What shal we speke at day of holy writte
The deuyl made a Reue foz to preche
Or of a soudre a shipman or a leche
Say forth thy tale and tary nat the tyme
So depford and it is half wey to pryme
So grene wiche that many a shrewe is in
It were alle tyme thy tale foz to begynne
Now sires quod this Ds Walde the Reue
I pray you alle that ye you nat greue
Though that I auns were and some dile sette his how
Foz lefulke is with force of show
This dronken wyker hath tolde vs here
How that begyled was a carpentere
Paraventure in scorn for that I am one
And by your leue I shalle him quyte auone
Right in his chorles termys wyll I speke
I pray to god his necke may to breke
He can wele in myn eye se a stalke
But in his own eye he can nat se a balke

The Reues Tale

Here endith the Reues prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



a T rompynton nat fer from cambrige
 There goth a broke and ouir that a brytte
Upon the whiche broke ther stonte a mylle
And this is berry soth that I you telle
A myllez was there duelling many a day
As any pecoke he was proude and gay
Pype he coude and fysshhe and nettys bete
And turne cuppes and wele wrastyl and sbete
And by his belt he bare alongt pauad
And of a swerd fulle trenchant was the blade
A ioly popper bare he in his pouche
There was no man for perylle durst him touche
A shefeld thwetyl bare he in his hose
Rounde was his face and camosed was his nose
Also pylled as an ape was his sculle

He was a market bettre at the fulle
 Ther durst no wight hand vpon him ledge
 That he ne swore anone he sholde a bedge
 A theif he was for sothe of corn and mele
 And that a sligh and vfaunt for to stele
 His name was y hote depnus Symkyn
 A wif he hadde y come of noble kynne
 The parson of the toun her fadre was
 With her he gaf many a panne of brasse
 For that Symkyn schulde in his blode alye
 She was y fostred in a nonrpe
 For Symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayd
 But if she were wele y noysshed and a mayde
 To saue his estate of yemanrpe
 And she was proude and pert as a pye
 A fulle fayre sight was vpon them two
 An holypday bifore her wolde he go
 With his tepet ybounde aboute his hede
 And she cam after in a gytte of rede
 And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same
 Ther durst no wight clepe her but dame
 Was none so hardy that went by the wey
 That with her durst ones rage or pley
 But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
 With pauade or with knyf or bodekyn
 For jelous folke been parlous euir mo
 Algates they wolde theyz wyues wenden so
 And eke also for she was somdele smotyrlliche
 She was as digne as water in a dicke
 And ful of hocouz and of bismare
 Her thought a lady sholde her spare
 What for her kynred and her noztylrye
 That she hadde lerned in the nonrpe

A doughter hadde they bitwix them two
 Of twenty yere withoute any moo
 Sauyng a childe that was of half yere age
 In cradyl it lay and was a proppz patte
 This wenche thicke and wele y growe was
 With camops nose and eyen grey as glas
 Buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hipe
 But right fayre was her here I wil nat lye
 The parson of the touyn for she was faire
 In purpos was to make her his heyre
 Bothe of his catel and of his messuage
 And straunge he made it of her mariage
 His purpos was for to bestowe her hipe
 Vnto som worthy blode of auncetry
 For holy chirche godes must be spende
 On holy chirche blode that is descended
 Therfore he wolde his holy blode honoure
 Though that he holy chirche schulde deuoure
 Grete sohyn hath this myllez oute of doute
 With whete and malt of alle the lond aboute
 And namely ther was a grete collyge
 Men clepith it the sokez halke in Cambrige
 There was theire whete & eke theire malt y ground
 And on a day it happed in a stounde
 Seek lay the manciple on a maladye
 Men wende wisely that he schulde dye
 Fro whom this myllez stale bothe mele and corn
 An hundred tyme more than he dyd biforn
 For there bifore he stale but curtesly
 But now he was a thief outrageously
 For whiche the wardeyn chidde and made fare
 But therof set the myllez nat a tare
 He craked host and swore it was nat so

The Reues Tale

Than were there yong scolers two
That duelden in this halle of whiche I sey
Testyf they were and lusty for to pley
And only for their myrth and reualrye
Upon the warden besily they cry
To yeue them leue but a lytel stounde
To go to the mylle and se their corne y grounde
And hardely they durst ley their necke
The myller sholde nat stele half a peche
Of corn by slepyght ne by force them reue
And at the last the wardyn gaue them leue
John hyght that one and aleyghight that other
Of a town were they born that hight strodre
In the north I can nat telle where
This aleygh makith redy alle his gere
And on an horse the saches he cast anone
Forth goth aleygh the clerke and eke John
With gode swerde and bokez by his syde
John knewe the wey him nedith no gyde
And at the mylle the saches adoun he leyeth
Aleygh spake first alhayle symond in feyth
How farys thy fayre doughter and thy wyf
Aleygh welcom quod Symkyn by my lyf
And John also hou now what do ye here
Symond quod John nede hath no pere
Him must nedes serue him selue that hath no swayn
Or elles he is a sole as clerkes scyn
Dure manciple I hope he wille be dede
So workith ay there wantys in his hede
And therfore I am come and this aleygh
To grynde oure corn and cary it home aleygh
I pray you spede vs hens in that ye may
It shalbe do quod Symkyn by my far

What wil ye do Whiles it is in honde
 By god right by the hopper wille I stonde
 Quod John and se hou the corn goth in
 yet sa w I neuiz by my fader kyn
 How the hopper wagges to and fro
 Alcy n answerd John wilt thou so
 Than wil I be byneth by my crow
 And se hou the mele fallith down
 In to the trough shalbe my disporze
 For John in feyth I may be of yourz sorte
 I am as euyl a myller as been ye
 This myller smyled of their nycpte
 And thought alle this is done but for a wyle
 They wene that noman may them begyle
 But by my thrift yet shalke I blere their eye
 For alle their sight and thaire philosophy
 The more queynt crakes that they make
 The more shalke I stole whan I take
 In stede of floure yet wil I gyue them bren
 The gretest clerkes be nat the wisest men
 As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mare
 Of alle their art ne count I nat a tare
 Dute of the doze he goth fulle pryucty
 Whan that he sawe his tyme softly
 He lukith vp and down tyl he hath founde
 These clerkes horse where he stode y bounde
 Behinde the mylle vndre a leef selle
 And to the horse he goth faire and wel
 He stripith of the brydel right anone
 And whan the horse was loos he gan to gone
 Toward the fenne where wilde marys renne
 Forth with wehy through thicke and thynne
 This myller goth aye n no worde he sayde

The Keyes Tale

But doth his note and with the clerkes played
Tyl that theire corn was faire and wele grounde
And whan the mele is saked and y bounde
This John goth forth and fynt his horse a wey
And gan to crye harow and wele a wey
Dure horse is loost aleyne by cockes bones
Step on thy feet come of man alle at ones
Allas oure wardeyn hath his palfrey lorne
This aleyne al forgat both mele and corn
Alle was oute of mynde his husbandrye
What whiche wey is he gone he gan crye
The wif come rennyng in warde at a renne
She sayd allas your horse goth to fenne
With wilde marys as fast as he may go
Outhanke come on his honde that bonde him so
And he that better sholde haue knytte the reyne
Allas quod John allas for cristes peyne
Ley down thy swerde and I wille myn also
I am fulle swyfte god wote as is a roo
By cockes soule he shal nat a scape vs bathe
Why ne hadde thou put the caple in the lath
Alle hayle be god aleyne thou art a fonne
These sely clerkes haue wele fast y ronne
Toward the fenne both aleyne and eke John
And whan the myller saw they were agoon
He half a bussel of theire floure hath take
And hadde his wif go knedde it in a cake
He sayde I trowe the clerkes were a ferde
yet can a myller make a clerkes berd
For alle theire art yet let them go thire wey
So where they goon so lette the children pley
They gette him naught so lightly by my croun
These sely clerkes rennyng by and down

The Reues Tale

With kepe kepe stonde stonde Jossa iossa Ware derere
Go whystyle thou there and I shalle kepe him here
But shortly tyl it was veryly nyght
They coude nat though they dyd alle their myght
They 2 capyl cache they ran alwey so fast
Tyl in a dicke they caught him at the last
Wery and weet as best is in the rayn
Comyth John the clerke and with him aleyne
Allas quod John the day that I was born
Now are we dryuen tyl hethyn and tyl scorn
Dure corn is stole men wille vs foules calle
Both the wardeyn and our felowes alle
And namely the myller wel a wey
Thus pleyneyth John as he goth by the way
Toward the mylle and bayerd in his honde
The myller spttynge by the fyre he fonde
For it was nyght and ferther myght they naught
But for the loue of god they him besought
Of herborough and of ease as for their peny
The myller sayde ayen if ther be any
Suche as it is yet shalle ye haue poure part
Myne house is stretyt but ye haue lernyd art
Ye can by argumentes maken a place
A myle brode of twenty foot of space
Let se now if this place wol suffise
Or make it romer with speche as is poure gyse
Now symond sayd this John by seint cutlerd
Ay art thou mery and that is wele aunswerd
I haue herd say men shal take of two thinges
Suche as he fyndes or suche as he bringes
But specially I pray the hoost so dere
Gette vs som mete and drinke and make vs chere
And we wol pay truly at the fulle

The Reue Tale

With empty bondes men may nat ha whes tulle
So here my syluez redy for to spende
This Myllez to the toun his doughter sende
For ale and brede and rosted them a goos
And bond theire horse he sholde no more go loos
And in his owyn chambre he made a bedde
With shetys and with chalons faire y spreadde
Nat from his owyn bedde ten fote or twelue
His doughter hadde a bedde al by her selue
Right in the same chambre by and by
It myght be no bet and cause why
Ther was no romer herborow in the place
They soupen and speken them of solace
And dronken euir strong ale at the beste
Aboute mydnyght went they to reste
Wele hath this Myllez bernysshed his hede
Fulle pale he was for dronke and nat rede
He peyith and he spekith through the nose
As he were in the quache or in the pose
To bedde he goth and with him goth his wif
As any Jay was she light and iolyf
So was her ioly whystyl wele y wette
The cradyl at her beddes feet was sette
To rocken and to yeue the childe souke
And whan that da whyn was in the crowke
To bedde went the doughter right anone
To bedde went aleyne and also John
There nas no more thez nedith them no dwale
This Myllez hath so wysely bybbed ale
That as an horse he snorteth and sleepe
Ne of his tayle behinde he tooke no kepe
His wif bare him a burdon fulle strong
Men myght here routynge therin a furlong

The Reues Tale

The wenche rowted eke par company
Alepyn the clerke that hard this melody
He poked John and sayde slepest thou
Hardyst thou euir suche a song or now
Lo whiche a coplyng is at wene them alle
A wylde fyre vpon thei2 bodie2 falle
Who herde euir suche a farly thyng
ye they shal haue the floure of alle euyl endyng
This long nyght the2 tyd me no rest
But yet no force alle shalbe for the best
For John sayde alepyn so mot I thryue
If that I may pon wyncche wyl I swyue
Some easement hath la we shapen vs
For John ther is a la we that sepeyth thus
That if a man in one thing be aggreued
That in a nother he shalbe releuyd
Dure corn is stole sothly it is no nay
And we haue hadde an euyl syt to day
And sithen I shal haue non amendement
Agayns my losse I wylle haue easement
By coches soule it shal none other be
This John aunswerd alepyn auyse the
This mytler is a parlous man he sayde
And if that he oute of his slepe abraide
He myght do vs bothe a vylony
Alepyn aunswerd I count him naught a fly
And by he roose and by the wenche he crept
This wenche lay by right and fast slept
Tyl he so nyght was or she myght aspy
That it hadde be to late for to crye
And shortly for to telle they were at one
Now pley alepyn for I wyl speke of John
This John lieth styll a furlong wey or two

The Reue Tale

And to him selue he made reuthe and wo
Allas quod he this is a Wicked iape
Now may I say that I am but an ape
yet hath my felaue som what for his harme
He hath the Myllers doughter in his arme
He antred him and hath his nedys spedde
And I ly as a draf sache in my bedde
And whan this iape is tolde a nother day
I shalbe holde a daffe a cokney
I wyl aryse and auntre it by my fayth
Unhardy is vnsefly thus men seyth
And by he roos and softly he went
Vnto the cradyl and in his arm it hent
And bare it soft vnto his beddes fete
Sone aftyz the wif her routyng leet
And gan awake and went her oute to pyffe
And cam ateyn and gan her cradel mysse
And groped here and there but she fonde none
Allas quod she I hadde almoost mysgone
I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bedde
By benedicite than hadde I foule spedde
And forth she went tyl she the cradyl fond
She gropith alwey forther with her hond
And fonde the bedde and thought but gode
Bycause that the cradyl by it stode
And nyxt where she was for it was derke
And fayre and wele she crept vnto the clerke
And lieth ful styllle and wold haue caught a slepe
Within a while this John by leep
And on this gode wif he lepyeth on soze
So mery a fytte ne hadde she pore
He pryched hard and soze as he were madde
This ioly lyp haue thies two clerkes ladde

Tyl that the thridde corke began to syng
 Aleyn weyt wery in the dawnyng
 For he had swynken alle the long nyght
 And sayd fare wele malyn swete wight
 The day is com I may no lenger byde
 yet euirmore where so I go oz ryde
 I am thyn owen clerke so haue I thele
 Now dere lemman quod she go fare wele
 But oz thou go o thing I wyl the telle
 When that thou Wendest hom ward by the mylle
 Right at the entre of the doze behynde
 Thou shalt a cake of half a busselle synde
 That was made of thyn owne mele
 Whiche that I holped my syre for to stele
 And gode lemman god the saue and kepe
 And with that worde almoost she gan to wepe
 Aleyn bprist and thought oz that it daw
 I wille go crepe in by my felawe
 And fond the cradyl with his hond anone
 Be god thought he alle wrong haue I gone
 My hede is toty of my swynke to nyght
 That makith me that I go nat a right
 I wote wele by the cradyl I haue my goo
 Here lieth the Myller and his wif also
 And forth he goth a tWenty deuyll way
 In to the bed there the Myller ley
 He Wend haue copen in by his felaw John
 And by the myller in he crept anone
 And caught him by the necke and soft spake
 He sayde thou John thou swyneshede a wake
 For cristes soule and here a noble game
 For by that lord that called is seynt Jame
 As I haue thries in this shorte nyght

S wyued the myllers doughter bolt by right
 Whiles thou hast as a colwarde be agast
 ye false harlot quod the myller hast
 A fals traytoure fals clerke quod he
 Thou shalt be dede by goddes dignyte
 Who durst be so bolde to disperage
 My doughter that is of suche lynage
 And by the throte bolle he caught aleyn
 And he hent him dispitously agayn
 And on the nose he smote him with his fyst
 Down ran the bloody streme by on his breeft
 And in the floze with nose and mouth to broke
 They walowed as pigges doon in the poke
 And by they gone and down agayne anone
 Tyl that the Myller spozned at a stone
 And down he felle bak ward on his wif
 That wist no thing of this nyce stryf
 For she was falle a sleep a lytel wight
 With John the clerke that wached had al nyght
 And with the falle oute of her slepe the brayde
 Help holy croce of Bromehome she sayde
 In manus tuas to the lord I calle
 Awake symond the fende is on me falle
 My hert is broken help I am but dede
 There lieth one on my wombe and on my hede
 Help Synkyn for the fals clerkes fight
 This John stert by as fast as he myght
 And troped by the wallis to and fro
 To fynde a staf and she stert by also
 And knewe the esters bet than dyd this John
 And by the walle a staf she toke anone
 And sawe a lytel shymeryng of a light
 For at an hole in shone the mone bright

The Reues Tale

And by that light she sawe them bothe two
But spherly she nyxt who was who
And as she saw a white thing in her eye
And whan she saw this white thing a spye
She wende the clerke hadde wered a bolupere
And with the staf she drewe ay nere and nere
And haue hyt this aleyne at the fulle
And smote the myller on the pylde scul
And down he goth and cryed hazow I dye
The clerkes bete him wele and leet him lye
And dressed them and toke their horse anone
And eke their mele and on their way they gone
And at the mylle doze yct they toke their cake
Of half a bussel stoure wele y bake
Thus is the proude myller wele y bete
And hath y lost the gryndyng of the whete
And payed for the souper euerydele
Of aleyne and of John that bete him wele
His wif is swyued and his doughter als
So suche it is a myller to be fals
And therto this prouerbe is sayde fulle soth
Him dare nat wene wele that euyl doth
A tylour shalle him selue betyled be
And god that sytteth high in mageste
Saue al this company grete and smale
Thus haue I quyte the myller in my tale

Here endyth the Reues tale

And here begynneth the Toke's prologue

¶ He Cooke of London while the reue spake
For ioye he thought he clawed him on the bake

A ha quod he for cristes own passiou
 This myllere hath a sharp conclusiou
 Upon his argument of herbetagge
 Wele soth sayde Salamon in his langage
 Ne bringe nat euery man in thy house
 For herbouryng by nyght is parlous
 Wele ough t a man auy sed for to be
 Whom that he bring into his pryuytpe
 I pray to god to yeue me sorow and care
 If euiz sithen I hight hodge of ware
 Herd I myllere bet y set a werke
 He hadde a iape of malice in the derke
 But goddes forbede that we styn tyn here
 And therfore if ye wouchsauf to here
 A tale of me that am a poure man
 I wol you telle as wele as I can
 A lytel iape that felle in oure cyte
 Dure hoost auns werd and sayde I graunt it the
 Now telle on Rogez loke that it be gode
 For many a pasty hast thou let blode
 And many a iache of douyz hast thou solde
 That hadde been twyes hote and twyes colde
 Of many a pylgrame hast thou cristes curse
 For of thy persely yet fare they the wers
 That they haue eten with the stubbed goos
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos
 Nowe telle on gentyl Rogez be thy name
 But I pray the be nat wrothe for game
 A man may say fulle sothe in game and play
 Thou sayst soth quod Rogez by my fay
 But soth pley quade pley as the flemyn g sayth
 And therfore harry bally by thy sayth
 Be thou nat wroth or we departen here

The Tokes Tale

Though that my tale be of an hostyllere
But neuirthelesse I Wyl nat telle it yet
But oz we departe I wis thou shalt be quytte
And ther withalle he lough and made chere
And seyde his tale as ye shal after here

Here endith the Tokes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



a Prentyes whilom duelt in oure cyte
Of craft of bytallers was he
As hayland he was as golde synche in the shawe
Broun as a bery a propre short felawe
With lockes y kempt ful fetously
Daunce he coude wele and iolyly
Than he was cleped parkyn reueloure
He was as fulle of loue and paramoure
As in the hyue fulle of hony swete

Wele was the wenche that with him myght slepe
 And at euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe
 And loued bettyr the nethir ende than the shoppe
 For when ther any rydyng was in chepe
 Dute of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe
 Tyl that he hadde alle the sight yseyn
 And daunsed wele he wolde nat come aye
 And gadred him a menye of his sorte
 To hoppe and synge and make suche disporte
 And there they set steuene for to mete
 To pleyen at the dysse in suche a strete
 For in the toun was there no prentyse
 That fayrez coude cast a peyre of dysse
 Than Dazhyn coude and therto he was fre
 Of his dispence in place of pryuate
 That fonde his maystere wele in his chaffare
 For oftyme he fonde his box ful bare
 For shortly a prentyce that is a reueloure
 That hauntith dysse riotte and paramoure
 His mayster shalke it in his shoppe aby
 Al haue he no parte of the mynstral sye
 For thift and riotte they been conuertible
 Al can he pley on getern or rebyble
 Reuel and trouthe as in a low degre
 They be fulle wrothe alday as men may se
 This ioly prentyce with his maystere stode
 Tyl he was nigh oute of his prentys hode
 Al were he snybbed bothe arely and late
 And sumtyme ledde with reuel to Newgate
 But at the last his mayster him bethought
 Whan on a day whan he his papere sought
 Upon a prouerbe that sayeth this same worde
 Wele bet is rottyn apul oute of horde

The Cokes Tale

Than that he roten alle the the remanaunt
So farith it by a riottous seruaunt
It is ful lasse harme to let him passe
Than he sholde alle the seruauntes in the place
Therfore his mayster gaue him a quyttaunce
And bad him go with sorowe and myschaunce
And thus this ioly prentyce hadde his leue
Now let him riotte alle the nyght or leue
And there is no thief withouten a sorwe
That helpith him to waste and to sorwe
Of that he brybe can or borow may
Anone he sent his bedde and his arraye
Vnto a compere of his owne sorte
That loueth dyce ryotte and disporte
And hadde a wyf that helde for contenance
A shoppe and swyued for her sustenance

Here endith the Cokes Tale
And begynneth the man of lawes prologue

O Dre hoost sa we wele that by the bright sonne
The arke of his artificialle day is ronne
The fourthe part and half an oure and more
And though he were nat depest stert in lore
He wylt wele it was the xviii day
Of aprylle that is messangere to may
And sa we wele that the shadowe of euery tre
Was as in length of the same quantyte
That was the body erecte that caused it
And therfore by the shadowe he toke his witte
That phebus whiche that shone so clere and bright
Degrees was ylb clomben on hight
And for that day as in latitude

The Man of Lawes prologue

It was ten of the clocke he gan conclude
And sodenly he plight his horse aboute
Lordinges quod he I warne you alle the route
The fourth part of this day is gone
Now for the loue of god and seint John
Lese no tyme as ferforth as ye may
Lordinges the tyme wastith bothe nyght and day
And stelith fro vs what pryuelly slepyng
And what thurgh neglegence in oure walking
As doth the streme that turneth neuiz agayn
Descending fro the monteyn into the prayn
Wele can senequye and many a philosophes
Be waylen tyme more than gorde in cofre
For losse of catel may recovered be
But losse of tyme shendyth vs quod he
It wil nat come ayen withouten drede
Nomore than wil malhyns madynhede
Whan that she hath in her wauntoneffe
Let vs nat mo wlyn thus in Idelnesse
f pre man of law quod he so haue ye blisse
Tel vs a tale anone as for ward is
ye be submytted thurgh youre fre assent
To stond in this case to my Juggement
Acquyte you now of youre behest
Than haue ye do youre deuoure at the leest
Hoost quod he depar dieux ie assent
To breke for ward it is nat myn entent
Behest is dette and I wolde holde sayn
Alie my behest I can no better sayn
For suche la we as man geuyth an other wight
He schulde him selue vse it by right
Thus wol oure text but neuir the leste certayne
I can right now no thristy tale seyn

The Man of lawes prologue

Than Chaucez though he can but lewdly
In metres or on rymyng craftely
Hath sayd them in suche englisshe as he can
Of olde tymes as knowith many a man
And if he ne hath nat sayde them leue Brothex
In one boke he hath sayde them in one othex
For he hath tolde of louers by and down
Mo than Dyd made of mencioin
In his epistelles that been fulle olde
What shorde I telle them sithen they be tolde
In youthe he made of Ceyes of alcion
And sith he hath spoken of euerichon
These noble wyues and thies noble louers eke
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Clepyd the sayntes lyues of cupyde
There may he se the large woundes wyde
Of Lucrese and of Babylone tyssby
The swerde of dydo for the fals Ene
The tre of philles for her demophon
The playnte of dyanere and of hermeon
Of adryane and eke of ysiphile
The barzeyn yle stondyng in the see
The dreynt liandre for her erzo
The terys of Bleyne and eke the wo
Of Briseyde and of Lacedomea
The cruelte of the quene medea
The lytel children hanging by the halse
For thy Jason that was of loue so false
Epyrmystra penelope and alceste
poure Wisshode comendyng with the best
But certaynly no worde writth he
Of that wicked ensample of Canace
That loued her owne Brothex synfully

The man of lawes prologue

Of whiche cursed stories I say fy
Of elles of Tyrus appolonius
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Berast his doughter of her madynhede
That is so horrible a tale for to rede
Whan he her thre w bpon the pauement
And therefore he fulle of auysement
Wolde neuir write in none of his sermons
Of suche vnkinde abhomynacions
Ne I wil nat reherse if that I may
But of my tale what shude I doo this day
We were fulle lothe be lykened doutles
To myses that men clepe pperides
Me thamorphoseos wote what I mene
But neuirthelesse I reck nat a bene
Thouth I com after him with haue we bake
I speke in prose and let him rymes make
And with that worde he with a sobre chere
Beggan his tale as ye shalle after here

Here endith the man of lawes prologe
And here begynneth his tale



The man of lawes Tale

O Hatefulle harme condicton of pouert
With thrist colde and hungere sore confounded
To ashen helpe the shameth in thyn hert
If thou none aske With nede art thou wounded
That berry nede vnwrappith al thy woundes hid
Wagge thyn hede thou must for indigence
Or stele or bittge or borowe thyn dispence
Thou blampst crist and sayest fulle bitterly
He mysdeparteth riches temporalle
Thy nyghboure thou witeest sinfully
And sayest thou hast to lyte and he hath alle
Parfay sayest thou somtyme he rekyn shalke
Whan that his tayle shal Brenne in the gleder
For he nat helpith the nedefulle in their nede
Berke what is the sentence of the wise
Bet is to dpen than to haue indigence
Thy selue nyghbour wol the despyse
If thou be poure fare wele thy reuerence
yet of the wiseman take this sentence
That alle the daies of poure men been wicke
Be ware therof or thou com to the prycke
If thou be poure thy broder hatyth the
And alle thy frendes fle fro the allas
O riche marchauntes full of wele ye be
O noble o prudent folke as in this caas
your bagges be nat fylled With ambes aas
But with syce synke that rennyth in your chaunce
At cristemasse mery may ye daunce
ye sechyn lond and see for your wynnynnges
And as wise folke ye knowe alle the state
Of reignes. ye been faders of tydinges
And tales bothe of pease and of debate
I Were ryght now of a tale desolate

The man of lawes Tale

Nere that a marchaunte gone is many a yere
He taught a tale the whiche that ye shalle here

i In surry whilom dwelt a company
Of chapmen riche and therto sadde and trewe
That wyde were senten theire spycery
Clothes of golde and satyn riche of hewe
Theire chaffare was so trusty and so newe
That euery wight hath deynte to chaffare
With them and eke to sellen them theire ware

Now fel it that the maysters of the sorte
Haue shapen them to Rome for to wende
Were it for chapmanhede or for disporte
None othez message wolde they thider send
But cam theire selue to Rome this is the ende
And in suche place as thought them auauntage
For theire entent they taken theire herbyttage

Soiojned haue thise marchauntes in that toun
A certayn tyme as fyl for theire plesaunce
But so bifyl that the excellent renoun
Of the Emperours doughter dame constance
Reported was with euery circumstaunce
Vnto thies surziens marchauntes in suche wise
Fro day to day as I shalle you deuysse

This was the comen boyce of euery man
Dure Emperoure of Rome god him se
A doughter hath that sith the worlde britten
To reken as wele her goodnesse as her beautye
Was neuiz suche a nother as was she
I pray to god in honoure her susteyne
And wolde she were of alle europe the quene

In her is high beaute withoute pryde
youth withoute gref or folpe
To alle her werkes vertue is her tyde

Humblenesse hath slayne in her al tyrannye
 She is a myrroure of alle curtesye
 Her hert is verzy chambre of holynesse
 Her hond mynyster of freedom for almesse
 And alle this boys is soth as god is trewe
 But now to purpos let be turne agayn
 These marchantes haue do fraught thez shippes new
 And whan they haue the blisful mady seyn
 Home to surry been they went agayn
 And done theire nedes as they haue do pore
 And lyuen in wele I can say nomore

Now fylit that these marchauntes stode in grace
 Of him that was the sowden of surrye
 For whan that they cam fro any straunge place
 He wolde him selue of his benygne curtesy
 Make them gode chere and besily aspye
 Tydinges of sondry realmes for to here
 The wondres that they myght se or here
 Amonge othez thinges specially

The marchauntes haue tolde of dame Custaunce
 So grete noblenesse in earnest seriously
 That this sowdan hath caught so grete plesaunce
 To haue her figure in his remembraunce
 That alle his lust and alle his besy cure
 Was for to loue her whils that his lypf may dure

Parauenture in that large boke
 Whiche men clepe the heuyn y writte was
 With sterres or that he his birth toke
 That he for loue shulde haue his dethe alas
 For in the sterres clerez than is the glas
 Is writen god wote who so coude it rede
 The deth of euery man withouten drede
 In sterres many a wynter there biforn

The man of lawes Tale

Was write the deth of hector and achilles
Of pompey Julpus or they were born
The stryf of Thebes and of hercules
Of Sampson Turnus and socrates
The deth. but mennys wyttes be so dulle
That no wight can rede it at the fulle

This souldan for his pryue counseyl sent
And shortly on this matere for to passe
He hath to them declared his entent
and sayd them certeyn but he myght haue grace
To haue Custaunce within a lytel space
He nas but dede and charged them on hys
To shape for him som remedy

Dyuerse men dyuerse thinges sayden
They argumentes casten by and down
Many a subtel reson forth they layden
They spake of magyke and abusoun
And fynally as in that conclusioun
They can nat se in that none auantage
Ne by none othez wey saue in mariage

Than sa we they there in suche difficulte
By way of reson to speke alle playn
Bicause that ther was suche dyuersite
Bitwixt theire both lawes that they sayn
They trowe that no cristen prynce wolde fayne
Wedden his childe vndre oure lawes swete
That vs was taught by mahound the prophete

And he aunswered them rather than I lese
Custaunce I wil be cristened doutles
I moot be herys I may none other chese
I pray you holde poure argumentes in pease
Saueth my lyf and be nat rechelesse
To getyn her that hath my lyf in cure

For in this woo I may nat long endure
 What nedith grete dylatacioun
 I say by trefte and embassetrye
 And by the popes mediacioun
 And alle the chirche and alle the cheualrye
 That in distrnctioun of maumentrye
 And in encesse of cristes lawe dere
 They been accorded so as ye shalle here

How that the sowden and his baronage
 And alle his lieges shulde cristened be
 And he shal haue Custaunce in mariatge
 And certayn golde I not what quantite
 And therto founde they sufficient surete
 The same accorde was sworn in either syde
 Now faire custaunce almyghty god the gyde

Now wolde som men wene as I gesse
 That I sholde telle alle the purueaunce
 That the Emperour of his grete noblenesse
 Hath shapen for his doughtere dame custaunce
 Wele may men know that so grete ordenaunce
 May noman telle in a lytel clause
 As was arayed for so high a cause

Bissoppes been shapen with her for to wende
 Lordes ladies knyghtes of grete renoun
 And othez folke ynough this is the ende
 And notyfied is oute thouth the toun
 That euery wight with grete deuocioun
 Sholde praye crist that he this mariatge
 Resceyue in grete and spede this viatge

The day is com of her departyng
 I say the wofulle day fatalle is come
 That there may be no lenger taryng
 But for ward they dresse them alle and som

The man of Lawes Tale

Custauce that was with sorow alle ouircom
fulle pale ariseth and dressith her to wende
for wele she wote there is none other ende

Alas what wondre it is though she wept
that shal be sent to straunge nacioun
fro frendes that her so tenderly kept
and to be bounde vndre subiectioun
of one she knowith nat the condicioun
husbondes been alle gode and haue be pore
that knowe wyues I dar say nomore

Madre she sayde thy wreched childe custauce
thy yong doughter fostred by so soft
and ye my modre my souerayn ple saunce
duez alle thing oute take crist on lofte
Custauce poure childe her recomaundeth ofte
vnto your grace for I shalle to Surrye
ne shalle I neuir see you more with eye

Alas vnto the barburyke nacioun
I must anone sithen that it is poure wille
but crist that dyed oure redempcion
so geue me grace his hestys to fulfille
I wreched woman no force though I spyll
women are boyn to thraldom and penaunce
and to be vndre mannys gouernaunce

I trowe at troye whan turnus brake the walle
of Ilion nor brent was Thebes the cyte
ne at Rome for the harme through Hanyballe
that Romayns hadde benquysshed tymes thre
nas herd suche tendre wepyng for pyte
as was the chambre for her departyng
but forth she mot whether she wepe or synng

of first mouyng cruel firmaruent
with thy dyurnalle swerth that crowdest alle

And hurtliste al fro Est to occident
 That naturally wolde holde another wey
 Thy croudyng set the heuy in suche array
 At the begynnynge of this fiers biage
 That cruel mars hath slayn this mariage
 O infortunat ascendaunt tortuous
 Of whiche the lord is helples falle alas
 Oute of his angle into the thridde house
 O mars occitasez as in this caas
 O feble mone vnhappy be thy paas
 Thou knettyst the there thou art nat rescuyed
 There thou were wele fro thens art thou wepyd
 Imprudent Emperouze of Rome alas
 Was there no philosophre in thy toune
 Is no tyme bettre than a nother in this caas
 Of biages is there none electioun
 Namely to folke of high condicioun
 Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y knowe
 Alas we been to lewde and elles to slow
 To shippe is brought this woful fayre mayde
 Solempnely with euery circumstaunce
 Now Jesu crist be with you alle she sayde
 There is no more but fare wele fayre custaunce
 She peyneth her self to make gode contenaunce
 And forth I set her sayle in this manere
 And turne ayen I wille to my matere
 The moder of the soldan Welle of bices
 Aspyed hath her sonnys playn entent
 Howe he wolde lete his olde sacrifices
 And right anone she for her counseyll sent
 And they cam to knowe what she ment
 And whan assembled was this folke in fere
 She sette her down and sayd as ye shalle here

The Man of Lawes' Tale

Lordinges quod she ye knowe wele enerichone
How that my sonne is in poynte for to lete
The holy lawes of oure alcazon
yeuen by goddes messangere machomete
But on a bowe to the grete god I hete
The lyf shalbe rather oute of my body stert
Or machometes lawe go oute of my hert

What shuld vs tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to oure body and penaunce
And after ward in helle to be draue
For we renewed mahoun oure creaunce
But lordes wil ye make assuraunce
As I shal say assentynge to my loze
And I shalbe made vs sauf for euir more

They sworn and assentyde euery man
To lye with her and dye and by her stonde
And eueryche in the best wise that he can
To strengith her shal his frendes fonde
As she that hath this empryse take on honde
Whiche ye shal here as I shal deuyse
And to them alle she spake in this wise

We shal first fayne cristendome to take
Colde water ne shal vs greue but a lyte
And I shal suche a fest and a reuel mak
That as I trowe I shal the sowdan quyte
For though his wif be cristened new so white
She shal haue nede to wasshe away the rede
Though she a fonte fulle of water with her lede

¶ Sowdannes rote of iniquite
Virago thou samarian the seconde
¶ serpent vndre femenyngte
y lye vnto the serpent depe in helle y bounde
¶ feyned woman alle that may confounde

The Man of lawes Tale

Vertue and Innocence throught thy malice
y Bred is in the as nest of every byce

¶ Sathan enuyous sithen that day
That thou were chased from oure heritadge
Wele knowest thou to women the olde wey
Thou madest eua to bring vs in seruatge
Thou wolde fordone this cristen mariatge
Thyn instrument so wele a wey the while
Makyst thou of women whan thou wilt bettylle

This sowdoneffe whom I blame and wary
Lette pryuelly her counseyl go theiſ wey
What shulde I lenger in this tale tary
She rideth to the sowdan on a day
And sayd to him that she wolde renye her lay
And cristendome of prestes honde fontge
Kerentyng her that she hethen was so longe

Beseching him to do her that honoure
That she myght haue the cristen folke to feest
To please them I wil do my labour
The sowdan sayeth I wil do at youre best
And kneeling thanked her of that request
So glade he was he nyst what to say
She kyssed her sonne and home she goth her way

Arpued be these cristen folke to lond
In surrye with a grette solempne route
And hastely this sowdan sent his sonde
First to his moder and to alle the reigne aboute
And sayde his wif was come withoute doute
And prayed her to ryde ayens the quene
The honouſ of his reitne to susteyne

¶ Grette was the prees and riche was the arraye
Of surryens and of Romaynes mete in fere
The modre of the sowdan riche and gay

The Man of Lawes Tale

Resceyued her with alle glade chere
As any modre myght her doughter dere
And to the next cyte there besyde
A soft paas solempnely thy ryde

That trowe I the tryumphe of Julius
On whiche that lucan makith suche a boost
Was ryallere ne moze curious
Than was the assemble of this blifful hoost
But this scorpyon this wiked goost
The solwdonnesse for alle her flatering
Cast vndre this fur mortally to styng

The solwdan cometh him selue sone after this
So rially that wondre was to telle
And welcometh her with ioye and blys
And thus in ioye and blisse Iete them duelle
The frute of euery tale for to telle
Men thought it whan tyme cam for the best
That reuel to stynt and men to go to rest

The tyme cam this olde solwdonnesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of whiche I tolde
And to the feste cristen men dresse
In generalle bothe yong and orde
There may men rialtpe and fest beholde
And deyntes mo than I can deuyse
But alle to dere they bought it or they ryse

W soden woo that euez art succehoure
To worldly blys spreynt with bitternesse
The ende of ioye and oure worldly labour
Wo occupieth the fyne of oure gladnesse
Herkyng this counsel for thy sphernesse
Upon thy gladde day haue in thy mynde
The vnwaaz woo that cometh the behinde
For shortly to telle at one worde

The Man of lawes Tale

The sowdan and the cristen euerichone
Been alle to he wynn and styched at the bord
But it were only dame Custaunce allone
This olde sawdonnesse cursed crone
Hath with her frendes there done this cursed dede
For she her selue wolde alle the countre lede

Ne there was surreyn none that was conuerted
That of the counseyl of the sowdan wote
That he nas alle to he wynn or he astertyd
And Custaunce haue taken anone fote hote
And in a shippe sterelles god it wote
They haue her set and hadde her lerne to sayle
Dute of surry ageyn ward into ytable

A certayn tresoure that she thidre ledde
And soth to sayn bytable grete plente
They haue her yene and clothes eke she hadde
And forth she sayled into the salt see
O my custaunce fulle of benygnite
O Emperours yong doughter dere
He that is lorde ouer fortune be thy stere

She blissed her and with ful pytous boyce
Vnto the crose of cryst thus sayd she
O clere o welefulle autre holy croyce
Rede of the lambes blode fulle of pyte
That wesseth the worlde fro olde iniquite
Me fro the feende and fro his clawes kepe
That day that I shal drenche in the depe

Victorizous tre of protectioun trewe
That only were worthy for to bere
The king of heyn with his woundes ne we
The white lamke that hurt was with a spere
Flemez of feendes oute of him and of here
Of whiche thy lynnes saythfully extende

The Man of Lawes Tale

He kepe and yeue me my lypf tamende
peres and daies fleet this creature
Through oute the se of greke into the strayte
Of marroke as it was herz auenture
Of many a sozr mele may she bayte
After herz deth ful ofte may she wayte
Or that the wilde wa wes wolde herz dryue
Vnto the place where she myght aryue

Men myght aske why she was nat slayne
Eke at the feest who myght herz body saue
And Jaunf werd to that demaunde agayne
Who saued danpel in the horrible caue
There euery wight were he mayster or knaue
Was with the loun fret or he a stert
No wight but god that she bare in herz hert

God lyst to she we his wouderfulle myracle
In herz for we schulde see his myghty werkes
Crist that is of enery harme tryacle
By certayn meanes as knowen clerkes
Doth thinges that for certayn ende fulle derke is
To manny's wytte that for oure ignozance
Ne can nat knowe his prudent purueaunce

Now sith that she nas at the feest y slaue
Who kept herz fro drenchyn in the see
Who kept Jonas in the fysshes maue
Tyl he was spouted oute of mynyue
Wele may men knaue it was no wight but he
That kept the peple hebrayche fro drenching
With dry fote oute through the se see passing

Who hath the foure spirytes of the tempeste
That powez haue to noyen londe and see
Both north and south west and est
Anopeth nether lond house ne tre

The Man of laWes Tale

Sothly the comaundre of that was he
That fro the tempest ay the woman kept
As wele whan she woke as whan she slept
Where myght this woman mete or drynke haue
Thre yere and more lastith her wyrtayle
Who fedde the egyptian mary in the caue
Or in deserte nat but crist sauns fayle
Iyue thousand folke it was as grete meruayle
With louys fyue and fysshes to fede
God sent his soyson at her grete nede

She dryueth forth into oure occian
Through oute oure wilde see tyl at the last
Vndre an holde that name I ne can
Her in northumberland the waWes her cast
And in the sond the shippe styched so fast
That thens wolde it nat al that tyde
The wil of crist was there she shulde abyde

The constable of the castel down is fare
To se this wracke and alle the shippe he sougth
And fonde this wey woman ful of care
He fonde also the tresoure that she bougth
In her langage mercy she be sougth
The lyf oute her body for to wyne
Her to delyuer oute of the wo that she was in

A maner latyn corrupt was her speche
But algates therby was she vnderstonde
The constable whan him lyst no lengere seche
This woful woman brought he to londe
She knelith down and thankith cristes sonde
But what she was she wolde to noman say
For foule ne fayre though she sholde dye

She sayde she was so mased in the see
That she forgate her mynde by her trouthe

The Man of Lawes Tale

The constable hath of her so grete pyte
And eue his wif that wepyth soze for routhe
She was so diligent withouten slowthe
To serue and please eueriche in that place
That al her loue that loken in her face

The constable and dame hermettylde his wif
Were paynems and that countre euery where
But hermettylde loued her right as her lyf
And custauce hath so long y soiozned there
In oryson with many a byttre tere

Tyl Iesus hath conuerted through his grace
Dame hermettylde the constablesse of that place

In alle that konde no cristen durst route
Alle cristen men be fledde fro that countre
Througth paynems that conquered alle aboute
The reame as wele by land as by see
To Wales than fledde the cristianyte
Of olde Britons dwelleng in that Ile
Ther was no refute for the meane while

But yet nere cristen Britones sone exiled
That there nare som in her pryuate
Honoured crist and he then folke bettyled
And nyght the castel suche there duelled thre
That one of them was blynde and myght nat se
But it were with thicke eyen of his mynde
With whiche they seen after men be blynde

Bright was the sonne as in a somers day
For whiche the constable and his wif also
And Custauce hath take the right wey
Toward the see a furlong wey or two
To pleyen and to romen to and fro
And in this walke the blynde man they mette
Croked and olde with eyen fast y shette

The Man of lawes Tale

In the name of crist cried this brytoun
Dame harmegylde yeue me me my sight aye
This lady wayt afrayed of that soun
Best that her husband shortly for to seyn
Wolde her for iesus cristes loze haue slayn
Tyl custaunce made her bolde and bad her wirche
The wyl of crist as doughter of holy chirche

The constable weyt abasshed of that sight
And sayd what amounteth alle this fare
Custaunce aunswerd sif it is cristes myght
That helpith folke oute of the seendes snare
And so fer forth she can oure la we declare
That she the constable or it were eue
Conuertyd hath and on crist made him beleue

This constable was nothing lord of this place
Of whiche I spake there he custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly many a wynters space
Vndre Alla king of al northumberland
That was fulle wise and hardy of his hond
Apenst the Scottes as men may wele here
But turue agayn I wil to my matere

Sathan that euer vs wayteth to betyle
Sa we of custaunce alle the perfectioun
And cast anone hou he myght quyte her while
And made a yong knyght duelling in that toune
Loue her so hote of foule affectioun
That berply him thought he shalle spyl
But he of her onys myght haue his wylle

He wol with her but it auayleth naught
She wolde do no synne by no wey
And for despyte he compassed in his thought
To make her on a shameful deth to dye
He wayteth whan the constable is a wey

The man of lawes Tale

And pryvely on a nyght he crept
In hermettyldes chambre whyles she slepte
Wery for waked in her orp sons
Slepith hermettyld and custaunce also
This knyght througth sathans temptacions
Alle softly is to the bedde y goo
And bytte the throte of her mettylde a two
And leyde the bloody knyght by dame custaunce
And went his wey ther god gyue him myschaunce

Sone after cometh the constable agayn
And eke Alla that was king of the lond
And sa we his wif dyspytously slayne
For whom he wept and wronge his honde
And in the bedde the bloody knyf he fonde
By dame custaunce allas what myght she say
For berry wo her witte was alle a wey

To king Alla was tolde alle this myschaunce
And the tyme and where and eke the wise
That in a shippe was founde this custaunce
As here bifoze ye may haue herd deuyse
The hinges hert of pyte gan aryse
Whan he sa we the benygne creature
Falle in disease and in mysaventure

For as the lambe toward his deth is brought
So stant this innocent afore the king
This fals knyght that hath this treson wrought
Berith her on honde she hathe do this thing
But nathelisse there was grete moznynge
Amongt the peple and sayden they can nat gesse
That hadde nat do so grete a wiche dne sse

For they haue seen her euiz so vertuons
And lounyng hermettylde right as her lyf
Of this bare witnesse eueriche in that house

The man of lawes Tale

Saue that he slowe hermettyld With the knyf
This gentyl king hath caught a grete motyf
Of this witnesse and though he wolde enquire
Deppere in this caas and trouthe for to leze

Allas custaunce thou hast no champpon
Ne fyght canst thou nat wele a way
But he that starf for oure redemption
Bond sathan and yet lieth there he lay
He be the stronge champion this day
For but if crist open myracle by the
Withoute gylt thou shalt be slayne as swythe

She sette her doune on her knees & thus she sayde
Immortalle god that sauedest susanne
Fro fals blame and thou merciful mayde
Mary I mene doughter of seint Anne
Bifore whose childe angeles syngte of anne
If I be gyltles of this felonye
My socoure be oz elles I shalle dye

Haue ye nat sumtyme a pale face
Amonge a prees of him that hath been ladde
Toward his dethe where he gettith no grace
And suche a coloure in his face he hadde
Men myght knowe his face that was be stadde
Amonge al the faces in that route

So standith custaunce and loketh her aboute

O quenes lypnyng whilom in prosperyte
Duchesses and the ladies euerichone
Haue som routhe on theiz aduersite
An emperours doughter stant alone

She wote nat to whom to make her mon e
O blode ryalle that stondith in this drede
Her been thy frendes at thy grete nede

This Alla king hath suche compassioun

The man of lawes Tale

A gentyl herte is fulfilled of pyte
That from his eyen ran the water doune
Now hastely go fet a boke quod he
And if this knyght wol swere that she
Hath thes woman slayne yet wol we bs auyse
Whom that we wol shalbe oure iustice

A breton boke writyn with euangelies
Was fet and thereon she swoze anone
She gylty was and in the meane whiles
An honde him smote vpon the neche bone
That down he fyl at ones as a stone
And both his eyen brest oute of his face
In sight of euery body in that place

A boyce was herd in generable audience
And sayde thou hast disclaundred gyltles
The doughter of holy chirche in hight presence
Thus hast thou done and yete I holde my pees
Of this meruayle agast was al the pees
As ma sed folke they stonden euerichone
For drede of wreche saue custaunce alone

Grete was the drede and eke the repentaunce
Of them that hadde wronge suspectioun
Vpon this sely Innocent cinstaunce
And for this myracle in conclusioun
And by custaunce mediacioun
The king and many another in that place
Conuerted was thanked be cristes grace

This fals knyght was slayne for his vntrouthe
By iugement of the king Alla hastely
And yet hath Custaunce of his deth grete routhe
And after this iesus of his mercy
Made Alla to wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden that is so bright and shene

The man of la Wes Tale

And thus hath crist made Custaunce a quene

But who was wofulle if I shalle nat lye

Of this weddyng but dongelde and no mo

The kinges modre ful of tyrannye

Bez thought her cursed hert brast a two

She nolde nat her sonne had do soo

Bez thought a despyte that he sholde take

So straunge a creature vnto his make

Me lyst nat of the chaf ne of the stre

Make so long a tale as of the corn

What shulde I telle of the ryalte

Of this mariage or whiche cours goth biforn

Who blowith in a trompe or who in a horn

The frute of euery tale is for to sey

They ete and drinke daunce syng and pley

They go to bedde as it is skylie and right

For though that wyues be ful hoip thinges

They must take in pacient a nyght

Suche maner necessaries as been plesinges

To folke that haue wedded them with ringes

And ley a lytel their holynesse a syde

As for the tyme it may none othez betyde

On her he begate a man childe anone

And to a bisskop and to his constable eke

He toke his wif to kepe when he is gone

To Scotlondward his fomen for to seke

Now faire Custaunce that is so humble and meke

So long is gone with childe in that styll

She kept her chambre abyding goddes wil

The tyme is come a man childe she bere

Mauricius at the fontstone they him calle

This constable doth forth come a messangere

And wrote vnto this kinge that cleped was alle

The man of lawes Tale

How that this bliffulle tydynge is befall
And othez thinge whiche was neddfulle to say
He takith his lettre and forth he goth his wey

This messangere to do his auantage
Vnto the kinges modre rideth he swythe
And salueth her fayre in his langage
Madame quod he ye may be glade and blithe
And thanken god an hundreth thousand sythe
My lady the quene hath childe withouten doute
To ioye and blisse of alle the reigne aboute

So here the lettres sealed of this thing
That I must here in alle the hast I may
If ye wyl ougtht to poure son the king
I am poure seruaunt both nyght and day
Donegeld aunswerd as now at this tyme nay
But here alle nyght I wille thou take thy rest
Tomorow I wil say the what me lyst

This messangere dranke sadly ale and wyne
And stolen were his lettres pryuelly
Dute of his boy whiles he slept as a swyne
And countrefeted was fulle subtely
A nother letere wrought ful synfully
Vnto the king directed of this matere
Fro his constable as ye may after here

The lettre spake the quene delpyered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature
That in the castel none so hardy was
There no while any wight may endure
The modre was an elphe by auenture
y comen by charmes or by socery
And euery wight hatith her company

wo was the king whan he this lettre hadde seyn
But to no wight he tolde his sorowes soze

The man of lawes Tale

But of his owen hond he wrote agayn
Welcom the sonde of criste for euir more
To me that am newelerned in this loze
Porde Welcom be thy lust and thy ple saunce
My lust I put alle in thy ordenaunce

Kepe this childe alle be it foule or fayre
And eke my wif vnto my home comyng
Criste whan him lyst may sende me an eyre
More aggreable than this to my lyking
This lettre he sealith pryuelly wepyng
Whiche to the messangere was y take sone
And forth he goth there is nomore to done

D messangere fulspilled with dronknes
Straunge is thy breth thy lymes flatern ay
And thou bewrethest alle secretenesse
Thy mynde is loze thou iangelyst as a Jay
Thy face is turned as in a newe aray
There dronknesse reigbeth in any route
There is no counseyle kept it is no doute

D donegelde I haue none englisse digne
Vnto thy malice and thy tyrannye
And therfore to the feende I the resigne
Let him endityn of thy traytoury
Fy manysshe fy o nay by god I lye
Fy feendly spyrite for I dare wele telle
Though thou here walke thy spyrite is in helles

This messangere cometh fro the king agayn
And at the kinges moders courte he light
And she was of this messangere fulle fayne
And pleased him in alle that euer she myght
He dronke and wele his tyrdyl vndre pight
He slepith and he snorteth in his gypse
Al nyght tyl the son gan aryse

The man of lawes Tale

After was his lettres stolen euerichone
And countrefeted lettres in this wise
The king comaundith his constable anone
Vp peyn of hanging and on high Iurse
That he ne schulde suffer in no wise
Custauce in his reigne for to abyde
Thre daies and a quarter of a tyde

But in the same shippe as he her fonde
Her and her yong sonne and alle her gere
He sholde put and croude fro the londe
And charge her that she come neuir est there
O my Custauce wele may thy goost haue fere
And slepen in thy dreame by penaunce
Whan donegelde castith alle this ordenaunce

This messangere on morowe whan he woke
Vnto the castelle holdith the next way
And vnto the Constable he the lettres toke
And whan that he this pytous lettre sawe
Fulle often he sayde allas and wele a wey
Lord crist quod he hou may this worlde endure
So fulle of synne is many a creature

O myghty god if that it be thy wille
Sithen thou art rightfulle inge hou may it be
That thou wil suffre Innocence to spylle
And wicked folke reigne in prosperite
O gode Custauce alias so wo is me
That I moot be thy turmentouze or elles deye
O n shamefulle deth there is none othez wey

weppyn bothe olde and yong in that place
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sent
And Custauce with a dedely pale face
The wey toward the shippe she went
But neuirthelesse she takith in gode entent

The man of laWes Tale

The Wyl of criste and knelint on the strond
She sayde ay Welcome be thy sonde

He that me hept fro the fals blame
Whiles that I was in the londe amonges you
He can me hepe fro harme and eke fro shame
In the salt see al though ye see nat hou
As stronge as euiz he was he is yet nowe
In him I trust and in his moder deze
That is to me my sayle and eke my stere

Her lytel childe lay wepyng in her arme
And knelint pytously to him she sayde
Pease lytel childe I wil do the none harme
With that the kyrchief from her hede she Brayde
And ouer his lytel epen she it layed
And in her arme she kullith it fulle fast
And into heuyn by her epen she cast

Godre quod she and mayde bright Marye
Soth is that through womannys egement
Mankynde was loost and dampned euiz to dye
For' whiche thy childe was on the croce to rent
Thy blisful epen sa we al this turment
Than is there no comparison bitwene
Thyn wo and any wo that man may susteyne

Thou sawest thy childe slayn afore thyn epen
And yet now lyueth my lytel childe parfay
Now lady bright to whom alle fulle crien
Thou gloze of womanhode thou fayre may
Thou haupn of refute bright sterze of day
Re we on my childe that of thy gentylnesse
Re west on euery re wful in distresse

O lytel childe alas what is thy gylt
That neuiz wroughest synne as yet parde
Why Wyl thy hazde fadre haue the spilt

The Man of Lawes Tale

¶ mercy and dere constable quod she
as let my lytel childe duelle here with the
And if thou darst nat saue him for blame
So kysse him onys in his faders name

Ther with she loked backward to the londe
And sayde fare wele husbond routhlesse
And by she rose and walked down the stronde
Toward her shippe her folowith alle the prees
And euer she prayeth her childe to holde his pease
And takith her leue with an holy entent
She bliffith her and into ship she went

¶ Bytayed was the shippe it is no drede
Habundantly for her long space
And othez necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde ynough heried by goddes grace
For wynde and weddre almyghty god purchase
And bring her home I can no better sey
But in the see she dryueth forth the wey

¶ Fla the king cometh sone after this

¶ Vnto his castel of whiche I tolde
And asked where his wif and his childe is
The constable gan aboute his hert to colde
And pleyntly alle the maner he him tolde
As ye haue herd I can it telle no better
And she with the kinges seale and his lettre

And sayde lorde as ye comaunded me
¶ On peyne of dethe so haue I do certayn
This messangere turmentyd was tyl he
Must be knowe and tel plat and playn
¶ Fro nyght to nyght what place he hadde in layne
And thus he with subtel enquiryng
¶ Imagyned was by whom this harme gan spring
The honde was knowen that the lettre wrote

The Man of Lawes Tale

And alle the benym of this cursed dede
But in what wise certaynly I not
The effecte is this that Alla oute of drede
His modre slough that men may playnly rede
For that she traytoure was to her ligeaunce
Thus endith olde donegyfde With myschaunce

The sorowe that this Alla nyght and day
Makith for his wif and for his chyldre also
There is no tonge that it telle may
But nowe wol I to custaunce go
That fletyth in the see with peyne and wo
Fyue yere and more as lyncheth cristes sonde
Or that her shippe approached to any londe
Vndre an hethen castel at the last
The whiche the name nat in text I fynde
Custaunce and eke her childe the see by cast
Almyghty god that saued alle man kynde
Haue on custaunce and her childe som myude
That fallen is in hethyn honde estsone
In poynte to spyll as I shalle telle you sone

Down from the castel cometh there many a wight
To gauryn on this shippe and on custaunce
But shortly fro the castel on a nyght
The lordes steward god yeue him myschaunce
A theef that hadde renyed oure creaunce
Cam into the shippe alone and sayde he sholde
Her lemman be whether she wold or nolde
Tho was this wretchid woman wo begone
Her childe cryed and she cried pytously
But blissed mary helped her right anone
For with her stroglyng wele and myghtyly
The thief fel ouer the borde al sodenly
And in the see he dreynt for benyeaunce

The Man of Lawes Tale

And thus hath crist vnwemmed kept custaunce

Of foule lust of luxurie lo thyn ende
Nat only that thou fayntest mannys mynde
But verely thou wylt his body shende
The ende of thy werke oz of thy lustes blynde
Is compleynyng hou many one may men fynde
That nat for werke somtyme but for thentent
To do this synne be othez slayne oz shent

Howe may this wech woman haue that strengith
Her to defende apenst the renegate
Of golyas vnmefurable of lengithe
How myght dauid make the so mate
So ping of armure and so desolate
How durst he loke vpon thy face
Wele may men seen it is but goddes grace

Who gaue iudith corage oz hardynesse
To slee him olifernes in his tent
And to delueryn oute of wrechidnesse
The people of god I say to this entent
That right as god spyrite and vigoure sent
To them and saued them oute of myschaunce
So sent he strengith and vigoure vnto custaunce

Fozth goth her ship through oute the narowe mouthe
Of iubalter and septe dryuyng alwey
Somtyme west and somtyme north and southe
And somtyme Est ful many a wey day
Tyl cristes modre y blessed be she aye
Hath shapen through her endlesse godenesse
To make an ende of alle her heuynesse

Now let vs stynt of custaunce but a throuwe
And speke we of Romayns the emperoure
That oute of Surry hath by lettrcs knowe
The slaughtez of cristen folke and dishonoure

The Man of lawes Tale

Doon vnto his doughter by a fals traytoure
I mene the cursed and Wicked so Wdoneffe
That at the feest leet she bothe more and lesse
For whiche this Emperour hath sent anone
His senatoure With ryalle ordenaunce
And othez lordes god wote many one
On surryns to take high vengeance
They brynne and slee & bring them to myschaunce
ful many a day but shortly this is the ende
Homward to Rome they shapen them to Wende
This senatoure repayreth With victoery
To Rome ward sealing fulle ryally
And mette the ship dryuyng as sayeth the stoz
In whiche custaunce sat ful ppytously
No thing knewe he what she was ne why
She was in suche arraye that she nyl sey
Of her astate though she schulde dey
He bringith her to Rome to his wif
He paue her to her and her yong song also
And with the senatoure she ladde her lyf
Thus can oure lady bring oute of wo
Custaunce and many a nother mo
And long tyme duelled she in that place
In holy werkes euer was her grace
The senatoures wif her ante was
But for alle that she knewe her neuiz the more
I wyl nolengere tary in this caas
But to king Alla whiche I spake of yore
For his wif wepith and sitheth sore
I wol retorne and yet I wyl custaunce
Vndre the senatours gouernaunce
King Alla whiche that hadde his modre slayne
Upon a day fyl in suche repentaunce

The Man of Lawes Tale

And if I shortly telle shalke and pleyn
To Rome he cometh to resceyue his penaunce
And put him in the popes ordenaunce
In high and lowe and Jesus crist besoughte
For yeue his wyched workes that he hath wroughte

The fame anone through Rome is boyn
How Alla king shal come in pygremage
By herbetgeours that wenten him biforn
For whiche the senatoure as was the vsage
Kode him ayens and many of his lynage
As wele to shewen his magnificence
As to done any kynng reuerence

Grete chere doth this noble senatoure
To kynng Alla and he to him also
Euery of them doth to othez grete honoure
And so besyl that on a day or two
This senatoure is to kynng Alla go
To fest shortly if I shal nat lye
Custaunces sonne went in his company

Som men wolde say at the request of custauce
This senatoure had ledde this childe to fest
I may nat telle euery circumstaunce
Be as be may there was he at the leest
But soth it is right at his moders heest
Biforn Alla durynge the mete space
The childe stode lokynge in the kinges face

Alla the king of this childe hath grete wondre
And to the senatoure he sayde alone
Whose is this fayre childe that stondeth yondre
I not quod he by god and by seint John
A modre he hath but fadre hath he none
That I of wote and shortly in a stounde
He tolde Alla how the childe was founde

The Man of Lawes Tale

But god woot quod this senatoure also
So vertuous a lyuer in alle my lyf
Ne saue I neuiz as she ne herde of mo
Of worldly wymen mayden wydowe or wif
I dar wele say she hadde leuez with a knyf
Through oute the brest than be a woman wyche
There is no man coude bring her to the pryche

Now was this childe as lyke vnto custaunce
As possible is a creature for to be
This alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of dame custaunce and theron mused he
If that the childes modre were oughit she
That is his wif and pryuely he sight
And spedde him fro the table that he myght

Parfay quod he the fanton is in my hede
I oughit to deme of rightfulle iugement
That in the salt see my wyf is dede
And after ward he made his argument
What wote I if crist haue her hidre sent
My wif by see as wele as he her sent
To my countre fro thens that she went

And after anone home with the senatoure
Both alla for to se this woundre chaunce
This senatoure doth alla grete honoure
And hastely he sent after custaunce
But trust wele her lust nat for to daunce
Whan she wyste wherfore was that sonde
Vnnethes vpon her fete myght she stonde

Whan alla saue his wif fayre he her grette
And wepte that it was routhe to see
For at the first loke that he on her sette
He knewe verely that it was she
And she for sorowe asombe stondith as a tre

The Man of la Wess Tale

So was hez herte sbytte in hez distresse
Whan she remembred of his unkyndnesse
T wys she swoned in his owne sight
He wept and him excused pytously
Now god quod he and alle his halowes bright

So wisely on my soule haue mercy
That of youre harme as giltles am I
As is my sonne Maurice so lyke youre face
Elles the fende me feche oute of this place

Long was the sobbyng and the byttre peyne
Or that hez wofulle herte myght sece
Grette was the pyte for to here them playne
Througgh whiche playntes gan hez wo encrece
I pray you alle my labour to relese
I may nat tel theire wo vntyl to morowe
I am so wery for to speke of sorowe

But fynally whan the soth is wist
That alla gyltles is of hez wo
I trowe an hundred tymes be they lyst
And suche a blisse is there betwixt them two
That saue the ioye that lastith euermo
There is none plyke that any creature
Hath seen or shal whiles that the worlde may dure

Tho prayed she hez husbond mekely
That in releef of hez pytous peyne
That he wolde pray hez fadre specially
That of his maieste he wolde enclpne
To bouche sauf som day with him to dyne
She prayed him eke he sholde by no wey
Vnto hez fadre no worde of hez say

Some men wolde seyn that the childe maurice
Doth this message vnto the Emperoure
But as I gesse alla was nat so nyce

The Man of Lawes Tale

To him that is so souerayne of honoure
As he that is of cristes folke the floure
Sent any childe but it is best to deme
He went him selue and so it may wele seme

This emperoure hath graunted gentylly
To come to dpynez as he him besought
And wele I suppose he lohed besyde
Vpon this childe and on his doughter thought
Alia goth vnto his Inne as him ought
Arayed for this feest in euery wise
As ferforth as his connyng may suffice

The morowe cam alia and gan him dresse
And eke his wif the Emperoure for to mete
And forth they ryden in ioye and in gladnesse
And when she sawe her fadre in the strete
She lyghteth down and fallith him to fete
Fadre quod she poure yong childe custaunce
Is now ful cleen oute of poure remembraunce

I am poure doughter Custaunce quod she
That whilom ye haue sent into surrye
It am I fadre that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye
Now gode fadre mercy I you crye
Sende me nomore into none hethnesse
But thankith my lord here of his kyndnesse

Who can the pytous ioye telle alle
Betwyx them thre sithen they be thus mette
But of my tale make an ende I shalle
The day goth fast I wyl no lengre lette
These glade folke to dpynez be y sette
In ioye and blisse at mete I lette them duelle
A thousand folde wele more than I can telle
This childe maurice was sithen emperoure

The Man of Lawes Tale

y made by the pope and lyued cristenly
To cristes chirche dyd he grette honoure
But I let al these stories passe by
Of custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romaynes gesses men may wele fynde
Mauricius lyf I bere it nat in mynde

Than king Alla whan he his tyme sey
With custaunce his holy wif so swete
To englonde be they come the right wey
Where as they lyuen in ioye and in quyte
But lytel while it lasted I you behete
Joy of this worlde but tyme wyl nat abyde
Fro day to nyght it chaungith as the tyde

Who lyueth euiz in suche delyte a day
That is ne meued either in consience
Do ire oz talent oz som kynnes affray
Enuye oz pryde oz passioun oz offence
I ne say but for the ende of this sentence
That lytel while in ioye oz pleasaunce
Pastith the lyf of Alla with custaunce

For deth that takith of high and lowe his rent
Whan passed was a yere eyn as I gesse
Dute of this worlde this king Alla is went
For whom custaunce hath fulle grette heynesse
Now pray we to god his soule blisse
And dame custaunce fynally to say
Towarde the toun of Rome goth her way

To Rome is come this holy creature
And fyndeth her frendes there hole and founde
Now is she scaped alle her auenture
And whan she her fadre hath y founde
Down on her knees fallith to grounde
Wepnyng in herte for tenderesse blythe

The Marchauntes Prologue

She harpeth god an hundreth thousand sythe
In vertue and in holy almes dede
They lpyen alle and neuiz a sondre Wende
Tyl dethe departed them this lyf they lede
And faryth now wele my tale is at an ende
Nowe Iesus crist that of his myght may sende
Ioye after wo gouerne vs in his grace
And kepe vs alle that been in this place

Here endith the man of lawes tale
And begynneth the Marchauntes prologe

Wepyng and waylyng care and othez sorowe
I haue ynough both eyn and eke a morowe
Quod the marchaunte and so haue othez mo
That wedded be I trowe that it be so
For wele I wote it fareth so by me
I haue a wif the worst that may be
For though the feende cuppled to her were
She wolde him ouirmache I dar wele swere
What shulde I reherse in spectalle
Her high malice she is a shrewe with alle
Thez is a long and a large difference
Betwixt grysilidis grete pacience
And of my wif the passyng cruelte
Were I vnbounde also mot I the
I wolde neuiz este come in thez snare
We wedded men lye in sorowe and care
Asay who so wol and he shalle fynde
That I say sothe by seint thomas of ynde
As for the more parte I say nat alle
God shelde that it shulde so befall
A gode siz hoost I haue wedded be

The Marchauntes Prologe

These monethes two and more nat parde
And yet I trowe he that alle his lyf
Hath weddyd be though men him ryf
Unto the hert ne coude in no maner
Telle so moche sorowe as I now here
Coude telle of my Wyues cursednesse
Now quod oure hoost marchaunte so god the blisse
Sithen ye so mekyl knowe of that arte
Ful hartely I pray you telle vs part
Gladly quod he but of myn owne soze
For soz hert I telle may nomore

Here endith the Marchauntes prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



W Rylom thez was duelling in lumbarde
A worthy knyght that born was at paup
In whiche he lyued in grete prosperyte

The Marchauntes Tale

And ly pere a wyfles man was he
And folowed ay his bodyly delyte
On women ther was his appetyte
As doon these foules that been seculere
And whan that he was passed ly pere
Were it for holynesse or for dotage
I can nat say but suche a grette coratge
Hadde this knyght to be a wedded man
That day and nyght he doth alle that he can
To aspyre where he myght wedded be
Prayng oure lord graunt him that he
Myght onys knowe that blissful lyf
That is betwixt an husband and his wyf
And for to lye vndre the holy bonde
With whiche god first man and woman bonde
None other lyf sayde he is worth a bene
For wedloke is so easy and so clene
That in this worlde it is a paradise
Thus sayde this olde knyght that was so wise
And certaynly as sothe as god is kyng
To take a wyf is a glorious thing
And namely whan a man is olde and hore
Than is a wyf the frute of the tresore
Than sholde he take a yong wyf and a fayre
On whiche he myght engendre him an heire
And lede his lyf in ioy and in solace
Where as these bachelers synngen alas
Whan that they fynden eny aduersite
In loue whiche nis but chilles banpte
And truly it sytteth wele to be so
That bachelers haue peyne and wo
On brotyl grounde they byld and brotylnesse
They synde freylte whan they wene sykernesse

The Marchauntes Tale

They lyue But as a Byrde or as a best
In lybertye and vndre none arest
There as a wedded man in his astate
Lyueth his lyf blifful and ordynat
Vndre the yoke of mariage y bounde
Wele may his hert in ioye and blisse ha bounde
For who can be so buyom as a wyf
Who is so trewe and eke so ententyf
To kepe him seke and hole as is his make
For wele or wo she wil him nat forsake
She is nat wery him to loue and serue
Though that he lye bedred tyl he sterue
And yet som clerkes sayen it is nat so
Of whiche he Theophraste is one of tho
What force though theophrast lyst lye
Ne take no wif quod he for husbondrye
As for to spare in householde thyn expence
A trew seruaunt doth more dilygence
Thy gode to kepe than doth thy selue wif
For she wyl clayme half part alle her lyf
And if that thou be seek so god me saue
Thy berry frendes or a true knaue
Wol kepe the bet than she that wayteth ay
After thy deth and hath done many a day
This sentence and an hundred thinges worse
Writeth this man there god his bones corse
But take no hepe of suche banyte
Do fyre theophraste and herkyn me
A wif is goddes pest berryly
Al othez maner pestes hardely
As londes rentes pastures or comune
Or moebles al ben pestes of fortune
That passen as a shadowe on a walle

The Marchauntes Tale

But drede nat if I playnly speke shalle
A wyf wil last and in thy house endure
Wele lenger than the lyst parauenture
Mariage is a fulle grete sacramnt
Who that hath no wif is but shent
He lyueth helples and is alle desolate
I speke of folke in seculer astate
And herken why I say nat this for nought
The woman is for mannys helpe y wrought
The high god whan he hadde Adam makid
And sa we him allone bely naked
God of his grete goodnesse sayde than
Let vs now make an helpe to this man
Lyke to him selue and than he made eue
Here may ye se and here by may ye preue
That a wyf is mannys helpe and his comforte
His paradyce terreste and his disporte
So buyum and so vertuouus is she
They must nedeslyue in bnyte
O flesshe they be and of o blode I gesse
Not but one herte in wil and in distresse
A wif a seinte Mary benedicite
How myght a man haue any aduersite
That hath a wif certes I can nat sey
The blisse that is betwixt them twey
There may no tonge telle it or hert thynke
If he be poure she helpith him to swynke
She kepith his gode and wastith it neuiz a dele
And alle that her husband lust shelykith wele
She sayeth nat onys nay when he sayeth ye
Do this sayeth he al redy siz saythe she
O bliffulle ordre o wedloke precious
Thou art so mery and eke so vertuouus

The Marchauntes Tale

And so comended and approued eke
That euery man that holt them worth a leke
Upon his bare knees ought alle his lyf
Thankyn his god that him sent a wyf
Whelles praye god him for to sende
A wyf to leste vnto his lyues ende
For than his lyf is set in spherneffe
He may nat be desceyued as I gesse
So that he worke after his wyues rede
Than may he boldly bere by his hede
They be so trewe and therto eke so wyse
For whiche if thou wylt werche as the wyse
Do alway as the woman wol the rede
Lo hou iacob as these clerkes rede
By gode counseyl of his modre rebecke
Bonde the hyddes shynne aboute his necke
For whiche his faders benyson he wan
Lo iudith as the stozey wele tel can
By wyse counseyl she goddes people kept
And slewe him olifernes while he slept
Lo hou abyttayl by gode counseyl that she
Saued her husbond Nabal whan that he
Sholde haue be slayne and loke hester also
By gode counseyl deliuered oute of wo
The people of god and made mardoche
Of assure enhaunced for to be
There is no thyng in gre superlatyf
As sayeth senequye aboue an humble wyf
Suffre thy wyues tong as caton byt
She shalle comaunde and thou shalt suffre it
And yet she wyl obey of curtesye
A wyf is hepar of thy husbondrye
Wele may the sekeman be wayle and wepe

The Marchauntes Tale

There as no wif is the house to kepe
I warne the if thou wilt wisely wirche
So wele thy wyf as crist loueth his churche
If thou louest thy selue thou louest thy wyf
Noman hatyth his flesshe but in his lyf
He fostrieth it and therfore bydde I the
Cherisse thy wif or thou shalt neuiz the
Husband and wif what so men iape or pley
Of worldly folke holden the siker wey
They been knytte they may no harme betyde
And namely bypon the wyues syde
For whiche this January of whiche I tolde
Considreth hath in his daies olde
The lusty lyf the vertuouse quete
That is in mariage honny I wete
And for his frendes on a day he sent
To telle them the effecte of his entent
With face sadde he hath his tale to them tolde
He sayd frendes I am hore and olde
And almost god woot at my pyttes brynke
Upon my soule som what must I thynke
I haue my body follyly despended
Blyssed be god it shalbe amended
For I wolde be certayne a weddyd man
And that anone in alle the hast that I can
Vnto som mayde fayre and tendre of age
I pray you shapith for my mariage
Al sodenly for I wil nat abyde
And I wol fonde to a spye on my syde
To whom I may be weddid hastily
But for a smoch as ye be mo than I
Ye shal rather suche a thyng aspyen
Than I where me lyst best alpyen

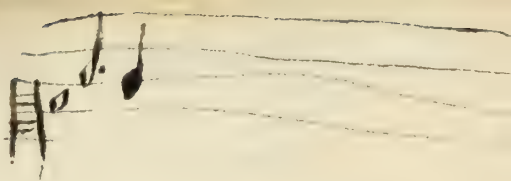
The Marchauntes Tale

But one thing I warne you my frendes dere
I wol none olde wif haue in no manere
She shal nat passe vbi yere certayne
Olde fyssh & yong flesshe wolde I haue ful fayn
Bet is he sayde a pyke than a pyherel
Bettre than olde beef is the tendre bele
I wol no woman of xxx yere of age
It is but bene strawe and grete forage
And eke these olde wydowes god it wote
They can so mekyl craft in wadys bote
Somekyl broken harme what them lyst
That with them shulde I neuiz lyue in rest
For sondry scoles makith subtel clerkes
Woman of many a scole half a clerke is
But certaynly a yong thing may men tye
Right as man with hondes warm wex ppe
Therfore I say you playnly in a clause
I wol none olde wyf haue for this cause
For if so were if I hadde suche myschaunce
That y in her coude haue no plesaunce
Than sholde I lede my lyf in aboutrye
And so streyght to the deuyl whan I dye
Ne children shulde I none on her getyn
yete hadde I leuz houndes hadde me etyn
Than that myn heritage shulde falle
In straunge honde and thus I telle you alle
I doute nat I wote the cause why
Men sholde wedde and ferthermore woot I
There spekith many men of mariage
That wote nomore of it than doth my page
For whiche causes men sholde take a wyf
If he may nat lyuen chaste his lyf
Take him a wyf with grete deuocioun

The Marchauntes Tale

Bicause of lefulte procreacioun
Of children to the honoure of god aboue
And nat only for paramoure ne for loue
And for they shulde lechery eschue
And yelde theire dette whan that it is due
Or for eche of them shulde helpe othez
In myschief as the sustre shalle the Brodre
And yue in chastite fulle holyly
But sires by poure leue that am nat I
For god be thanked I dar make abaunt
I fele my lymes starke and sufficiaunt
To do alle that a man belongith to
And am stronge ynogh to ryde or go
Though I be hore I fare as doth a tre
That blosometh or that frute y woxen be
A blosomed tre is neither drye ne dede
I fele me nowhere hore but on my hede
My herte and al my lymes been as grene
As laurez that through the yere is sene
And sithen ye haue herd al myn entent
I pray you that to my wil ye assent
Of dyuerse men dyuersly him tolde
Of mariage many ensamples olde
Som blamed it som prysed it certayn
But at the last shortly for to sayn
As alday fallith alteracioun
Betwixt frendes in disputacioun
There fyl a stryf bitwixt his brethern two
Of whiche the one was cleped Placebo
Justinus sothly called was that othez
Placebo sayd o January brothez
Ful ytel nede hadde ye my lorde sodere
Counseyl to aske of any that is here

The Marchauntes Tale

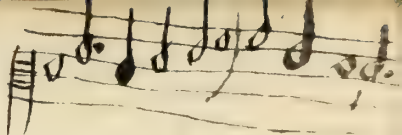


But that ye be one so ful of sapience
That you ne lpheth for your high prudence
To wepul for the worde of salamon
This worde sayed he to vs euerichone
Worke alle thing by counseyl thus sayed he
And than shalt thou nat repente the
But though Salamon spake suche a worde
Myn owne dere brother and my lorde
So wisely god my soule bring at rest
I holde youre owne counseyl for the best
For brother myn of me take this motyf
I haue now been a courtman alle my lyf
And yet god wote though I vnworthy be
I haue stonde in fulle grette and high degre
A boute lordes in ful grette astate
yet hadde I neuiz with none of them deBate
I neuiz contraried them truly
I wote wele that my lord can more than I
what that he sayeth I holde it ferme and stable
I say the same or othez thing semblable
A fulle grette fole is any counseloure
That seruyth a lorde of grette honoure
That dar presume or onys thynke it
That his counseyl sholde passe his lordes wytte
Nay lordes be no foles by my fay
ye haue youre selue spoken here to day
So high sentence so holy and so wele
That I consent and conferme euery dele
your wordes and al youre opunyon
By god thez is no man in this toun
Ne in ytalpe coude better haue sayde
Crist holdith him of this ful wele apayed
And truly it is an high coratge

The Marchauntes Tale

Of any man that stept is in a age
To take a yong wif for by my fadre kynne
youre hert hongith vpon a ioly pyne
Doth now in this matere as ye lyst
For fynally I holde it for the best
Justinus that ay sat ful styll and herde
Right on this wise he to placebo answerd
Now brother myn quod he be pacient I pray
Sithen ye haue sayde her kyn what I say
Seneke among othez wordes wise
Sayeth that a man ought him right wele auyse
To whom he yeueth his londe or his catel
And sithnes I ought me auyse right wele
To whom I yeue my gode a way frome
Wele moche more I ought for to auyse me
To whom I yeue my body for al wey
I warne you wele it is no childes play
To take a wyf withoute auysement
Men must enquere this is myn assent
Whether she be wise sobre or dronke we
An oute goer or other wey a shrewe
A chidester or a waster of thy gode
Kiche or poure or of maners wode
Al be it so that no man fynde shalle
None in this worlde that trottith hole in alle
Ne man ne beest suche as men can deuyse
But neuirthelesse it ought ynough suffice
With any wif if so that she hadde
Mo the wes gode than her vices hadde
And al this askith lyses to enquere
For god it wote I haue wept ful many a tere
Ful pruely sithen I hadde a wif
Dryse who so wyl a wedded manns lyf

The Marchauntes Tale



Certayne I fynde it but cost and care
And obseruaunces of alle blisses bare
And yet god wote my nyghboures aboute
And namely of Women many a route
Sayn that I haue the moost stedefast wif
And eke the mekest one that berith lyf
But I wote best where bringith me my sho
ye may for me right as ye lyke doo
Aupseth you ye be a man of age
How that ye entren into mariatte
And namely With a yong wif and a fayre
By him that made watyr erthe and eyre
The yongest man that is in alle this route
Is besy ynough to bring it aboute
To haue a wif alone but trustith me
ye shal nat plesen her only yeres thre
This is to say to do her ful plesaunce
A wif askith ful many an obseruaunce
I pray you that ye be nat euyl apayed
wele quod this January and haue ye sayd
Strawe for thy seneke and thy prouerbes
I counte nat a panyer ful of herbes
Of scole termes wiser men than thou
As thou hast herde hath sentyd right nowe
To my purpose Placebo what say ye
I say he is a cursed man quod he
That lettyth matromonye siberly
And with that worde they rysen sodenly
And been assentyd anone that he sholde
Be wedded whan him lyst and where he wolde
Rygh fante sy and the besy coriounesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule impressse
Of January aboute his mariage

The Marchauntes Tale

Many faire shappe and many faire visage
There passith through his herte nyght by nyght
As who so toke a myrroure polished bright
And set it in a comon market place
Than shulde he se many a figure pace
By this myrroure and in the same wise
Gan January in with his thought deuyse
Of maydens whiche duelled there beside
He wist nat where she myght abyde
For if one hadde beaute in her face
A nother stont in the peoples grace
For her sadnesse and her benignyte
That of the people grete boyce hadde she
And som were riche and had badde name
But neuertheless bitwyt ernest and game
He at the last appoynted him in one
And lete alle othez fro his herte gone
And chose her on his owne auctoryte
For loue is blynde a day and may nat see
And whan he was in his bedde y brought
He portreyed in his herte and in his thought
Her fresshe beaute and her age tendre
Her myddel smalle her armes long and skendre
Her wise gouernaunce and her gentylnesse
Her womanly beryng and her sadnesse
And whan he was of her condescended
Him thought his chose myght nat be amended
For whan he him selue concluded hadde
Him thought eche othez mannys witte so hadde
That impossible it were for to repleye
Aynst his choyse this was his fantesye
His frendes sent he to at his instaunce
And prayed them to do him that plessaunce

The Marchauntes Tale

That hastely they wolde to him come
He wolde abridge theire labour al / some
Nedith no more for him to go ne ryde
He was appoynted there he wolde abyde
Placebo cam and eke his frendes sone
And alderfirst he badde them alle abone
That none of them none argumentes shode make
Apenst the purpos whiche that he hadde y take
Whiche purpos was pleisant to god sayde he
And berry grounde of his prosperyte
He sayde ther was a mayden in the toun
Whiche that of beaute hadde grete renoun
Al were it so she was of smalle degre
Suffisith him her youth and her beaute
Whiche mayde he sayde he wolde haue to his wif
To lede in ease and holynesse his lyf
And thanke god that he myght haue her alle
That no wight with his blisse parten shalle
And prayed them to labour in this nede
And shapen that he fayleth nat to spede
And than he sayde his spprite was at ease
Than is quod he nothing me may displese
Saue one thing prickith me my conscience
The whiche I wyl reherse in youre presence
ye haue herd sayde ful long sithnes agoo
Ther may no man haue parfite blisses two
This is to say in erth and eke in heuyn
for though he kept him fro the synnes seuyn
And eke from euery braunche of that tre
yet is there so parfyte prosperyte
And so grete ease and lust in mariage
That euiz I am agast now in myn age
That I shal lede now so mery a lyf

The Marchauntes Tale

So delicate withoute wo and stryf
That I shal haue my heuyn in erthe here
For sithen berry heuyn is bought so dere
With tribulacion and grette penaunce
How sholde they than that lyue in suche plesaunce
As al wedded men doon with their wyues
Come to the blisse there crist eterne on lyue is
This is my drede and ye my brethern twey
Assyleth me this question I you pray
Justinus whiche that hatyd his foly
Answerd anone right in his iapery
And for he wolde his long tale abridge
He wolde none othez auctozyte aledge
But sayde sir if ther be none obstakyl
Othez than this god of his high myracle
And of his mercy may so for you wirche
That or ye haue youre rightes of holy chirche
Ye may repente of wedded mannyshyft
In whiche ye say there is no woo ne stryf
And cles god forbede but if he sent
A wedded man grace him to repent
Wele ofter rather than a synge man
And therfore the best rede that I can
Dispeyareth you nat but haue in memory
Paraventure she may be youre purgatory
She may be goddes mene and goddes whippe
Than shal youre soule by to heuyn shippe
Swifter than an arrowe doth oute of a bowe
I hope to god hereafter shal ye knowe
That there nys none so grette felycite
In mariatte ne neuiz none shalbe
That you shal let of youre saluacion
So that ye vse it as shyl is and reson

The Marchauntes Tale

The lustes of youre Wif temporally
And that ye please her nat to amourously
And that ye kepe you eke from others synne
My tale is done for my Witte is thynne
Be nat agast herof my dere Brothex
But let vs Wade fro this matere to an othex
The Wif of Bathe if ye haue vnderstonde
Of mariatte whiche I haue in honde
Declared hath ful wele in litel space
I fareth now wele god haue you in his grace
And with this worde he with his Brothex
Hath take his leue and eche of them of othex
For whan they sa we it must nedes be
They wrought so by sligh and wise trefye
That this mayde whiche that May hight
As hastely as euil that she myght
Shal wedded be vnto Januarpe
I trowe it were you long to tarpe
If I you tolde of euery escripte and bonde
By whiche she was enfeoffed in his lond
Othex for to herke of her riche arrape
But fynally comen is the day
That to the chirche bothe been they went
For to resceyue the holy sacrament
Forth cometh the preest with stole aboute his necke
And badde her be lyke Sarza and rebecke
In wisdom and trouthe of mariatte
And sayde his oryson in his vsage
And croched them and badde god sholde them bles
And made al siker ynough with holynesse
Thus been they weddid with solempnyte
And at the feest sytteth he and she
With othex worthy folke vpon the deys

The Marchauntes Tale

Al fulle of ioye and blisse is the paleys
And ful of instrumentes and bytayne
The moost deyntheous of alle yttayle
Biforn him stode instrumentes of suche a soun
That Orphus ne of Thebes amphion
Ne made neuiz suche a melodye
At every cours cam loude mynstralcye
That neuiz ioab tromped for to here
Neyther the theomodas half so clere
At thebes whan the cyte was in doute
Bachus the wyne them shenwith alle aboute
And venus lough bpon every wight
For January was becomen her knyght
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertye as eke in mariage
And with her firebronde in her honde aboute
Daunsith biforn the bryde and alle the route
And certaynly I dar wele sayn right this
E menyus that god of weddyng is
Sa we neuiz in his lyf so mery a wedded man
Holde thou thy pease thou poete marcian
That writest vs that ilke a wedding mery
Of her philologye and of him mercurye
And of songes that the muses song
To smalle is bothe penne and eke tong
For to discryuen of this mariage
Whan tendre youthe hadde wedded stouppng age
There is suche myrthe that it may nat be writen
Assay poure selue and than may ye wyttyn
Of that I lacke or none in this matere
May that sittyth with so benygne chere
Her to be holden it semeth a fayrpe
Quene hester loked neuiz with suche an eye

The Marchauntes Tale

On assuere so meke a loke as she
I may you nat deuyse al her beaute
But thus moche of her beaute telle I may
That she was lyke the bright morow of May
Fulfilled of al beaute and of plesaunce
This January is rauysshed in a traunce
At euery tyme he loked on her face
But in his herte he gan her manace
That he that nyght in armes wolde her streyne
Harder than Paris euir did Eleyne
But neuirthelesse yet hadde he grete pyte
That that nyght offende her must he
And thought allas o tendre creature
Now wolde god ye myght wele endure
Al my coratge it is so sharpe and hene
I am a gast ye may it nat sustene
But god forbede I dyd alle my myght
Nowe wolde god it were woye nyght
And that the nyght wolde lest euir mo
I wolde that al this people were ago
And fynally he doth alle his labour
As he myght best sauyng his honoure
To hast them fro the mete in subtel wise
The tyme cam that reason was to ryse
And after that men daunfed and dranke fast
And spices alle aboute the house they cast
And ful of ioye and blisse is euery man
Alle but a squyer that hight Dampyan
Whiche carft bifoze the knyght many a day
He was so rauashed on his lady May
That for the berry peyne he was nyght wode
Almoost he sweltyd and swounded there he stode
So soze hath Venus hurte him with her bronde

The Marchauntes Tale

As that she bare it daunsyng in her honde
And to his bedde he went him hastely
Nomoze of him at this tyme speke I
But there I lette him wepe ynough and pleyne
Tyl freshe may wyl rewe vpon his peyne
O perous fyre that in the bedstrawe bredith
O famplier so that his seruice bedith
O seruaunt traytoure fals homely he we
Epe to the addre sligth in bosom vntre we
God sheld vs alle from youre acqueyntaunce
O January dronken in plesaunce
O mariage. se hou that thy Dampyan
Thyn owne squyer and thy boyn man
Entendith for to do the a belony
God graunte the thyn homely foo to aspy
For in this worlde nys worse pestilence
Than an homely fo alday in thy presence
Parfourmed hath the sonne his arke dyurne
Ne lenger may the body of him soiourne
On the ozifont as in that latitude
Nicht with his mantel that is so derke and rude
Gan for to spede the emyspery aboute
For whiche departed is the lusty route
Fro January with thanke on euery syde
Home to their houses lustely they ryde
There as they do thinges as them lyst
And when they se their tyme they go to rest
Sone after this hastely this January
Wolde go to bedde he wolde no lenger tary
He drynkith ypocrace clarrey and bernage
And spices hote to encrease his corage
And many a lectuary hadde he ful fyne
Suche as the cursed monke dan constantyn

The Marchauntes Tale

Hath Writen in his boke of coitu
To ete them alle he wolde nothing escheu
And thus to his pryue frendes sayde he
For goddes loue as sone as it may be
Let boyde al this house in curtese wise
And they haue done right as he wolde deuyse
Men dronken and the trauers drewe anone
This bryde was brought to bedde as styll as stone
And whan the bedde was with the preest blessid
Dute of the chambre hath euery wight him dressid
And January hath fast in armes take
His fresche may his paradise his make
He lullith her he kissith her ful ofte
With the brysselles of his berd vnsoft
Pyke to the shynne of hounde fyssh sharp as brere
For he was shaued alle newe in his manere
He rubbeth her vpon her tendre face
And sayde thus alas I must trespace
To you my spouse and you gretly offende
Or tyme come that I wyl down descende
But nathelesse considreth wele quod he
Ther is no workman what so euer he be
That may worche wele and hastely
This wolde he do at leysur parfytly
It is no force hou long that we pley
In trewe wedloke coupled be we twey
And blissed be the yoke that we be in
For in oure actes we may do no syn
A man may do no synne with his wif
Ne hurte him selue with his owne knyf
For we haue leue to pley vs by the la we
Thus lauborith he tyl the day gan da we
And than he takith a sopp in fyne clarre

The Marchauntes Tale

And by right in his bedde sitteth he
And after that he song ful loude and clere
And byssith his wif and makith wanton chere
He was al coltysshe and ful of ragery
And ful of iargton as is fliched pye
The slache shynne aboute his necke shakith
While that he song so chaunteth he and crakith
But god wote what may thought in her herte
Whan she sawe him by sytting in his shert
In his nyght cappe and with his necke lene
She pryseth nat his pleiyng worth a bene
Than sayde he thus my rest I wol take
Now day is come I may no lengre wake
And down he leyde his hede and slepte tyl pryme
And after whan that he sawe his tyme
Up riseth January but fresshe may
She holdith her chambre tyl the fourth day
As vsage is of wyues for the best
For euery labourer somtyme must haue rest
Or elles long may he nat endure
This is to say nolyues creature
Be it fysshe or byrde beste or man
Now wyl I speke of wofulle Dampyan
That langureth for loue as ye shal here
Therefore I speke to him in this manere
I say o sely Dampyan alas
Answer to this demaunde in this caas
How shalt thou thy lady fresshe May
Telle thy woo she wyl alwey say nay
Eke if thou speke she wol thy wo be wreyen
God be thy helpe I can no better seyn
This seeke Dampyan in Venus grete fyre
So brennyth that he dyeth for de fyre

The Marchauntes Tale

For whiche he puttyth hislyf in auenture
No lenger myght he in this wise endure
But pryuelly a penner gan he sorowe
And in a lettze wrote alle his sorowe
In maner of a complaynte or a lay
Vnto his fresshe and faire lady may
And in a purs of sylke hing it on his sherte
He hath y put and y leyde it on his herte
That January hath wedded fresshe may
The mone that at none was that day
Dute of Taure was in the Tanker slyden
So long hath mayus in her chambre byden
As custome is vnto these nobles alle
A byrde shal nat etyn in the halle
Tyl daies foure or thre at the lest
Passed be than lette him go to feest
The fourth day complete fro none to none
Whan that the high masse was y done
In halle sat this January and May
As fresshe as is the bright Jomeres day
And so besyl that this gode man
Remembrith him vpon this Dampyan
And sayde seint mary how may this be
That dampyan entendith nat to me
Is he ay seek or how may this betyde
His squyer whiche that stode him besyde
Excused him bicause of his seeknesse
Whiche lettith him to do his besynesse
None othez cause myght make him to tary
That me forthinketh quod this January
He is a gentyl squyer by my trouthe
If that he dyed it were harme and routh
He is wise discrete honest and secre

The Marchauntes Tale

As any man I wote of his degre
And therto manly and che seruyfable
And for to be a thristy man right able
But after mete as sone as euir I may
I wyl my selue bisyte him and may
To do him al the comforte that I can
And for that worde him blissed euery man
That of his bountye and of his gentylnesse
He wolde so comforte in sekeneesse
His squyer for it was a gentyl dede
Dame quod this January take gode hede
That after mete ye with youre women alle
Whan ye haue be in chambze oute of this halke
That alle ye go to se this Dampyan
To do him disporthe he is a gentyl man
And tellith that I wyl him bisyte
Haue I nothing but restyd me a lyte,
And spede you fast for I wol abyde
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde
And with this worde he gan to him calle
A squyer that was marshal of his halke
And tolde him certayn thinges what he wolde
This fresshe may hath streight her wey holde
With alle her women vnto this dampyan
Down by his bedde syde anone sat she than
Comfortyng him as godely as she may
This dampyan whan he his tyme say
In pryuy wise his purse and eke his byl
In whiche that he writen hadde alle his wyl
Hath put into her honde withouten more
Saue that he sighed right wonderly soze
And softly to her right thus sayde he
Mercy and that ye discouez nat me

The Marchauntes Tale

For I am dede if that this thing be kyd
This byl had she in her bosom kyd
And wente her wey ye gett nomore of me
Vnto January comyn there is she
And on his beddes syde sat ful softe
He takith her and kyssith her ful oft
He leyde him down to slepe and that anone
She feyned her as that she must gone
There as ye wote euery wight must nede
And whan she of this bylle hath take hede
She rente it alle to cloutes and at the last
In the pryue softly she hath it cast
Who studieth now but fayre fresshe may
And down by olde January she lay
That slept tyl the cowgh hath him awaked
Anone he prayed her to stripe her naked
He wolde of her he sayde haue som plesaunce
He sayde her clothes dyd him encumbraunce
And she obeyeth be she leef or tothe
But lest that precious folke with me be wrothe
Hou that he wrought I dar you nat telle
Or whether her thought it paradise or helle
But I lette them wirche in their wise
Tyl euyn song and that they must aryse
Were it by destyne or by auenture
Were it by infuence or by nature
Or constillacioun that in suche astate
The heuyn stode that tyme fortunat
Was for to put a byl in venus werkes
For alle thing hath tyme as sayen clerkes
To any woman for to gete her loue
I can nat say but the grete god aboue
That knowith that none acte is causeles

The Marchauntes Tale

He demeth al for I Wyl holde my pease
But soth it is hou that this freshe may
Hath take suche impressioun that day
Of pyte of this seke man Dampyan
That fro her hert she it dryue ne can
The remembraunce for to do him ease
Certayn thought she whom this thing displease
I here reche nat I him assure
To loue him best of any creature
Though he nomore hadde than his shert
So pyte rynneth sone in gentyl herte
Here may ye here hou excellent fraunchise
In women is whan they them narowe auyse
Some tyrannt ther is as ther be many one
That hath an herte as hard as any stone
Whiche wolde haue let him sterue in the place
Wele rather than haue graunted him grace
And them reioy sen in their cruel pryde
And reched nat to be an homycyde
This gentyl may fulfilled of al pyte
Ryght so of her honde a lettre made she
In whiche she graunted him her berzy grace
Ther lackith nought but only day and space
Where that she myght to his lust suffise
For it shal be ryght as he wol deuyse
And whan she sawe her tyme vpon a daye
To visyte this Dampyan goth this freshe may
And subtelly a lettre down she thriste
Vndre his pylowe rede it if him lyst
She takith him by the houde and herd him twyft
So secretly that noman it wyfte
And badde him be alle hole and forth she went
To January whan that he for her sent

The Marchauntes Tale

Up riseth dampan the next morowe
Al passed was his sekenes and his sorowe
He kembith him and proyneth him and pykith
He doth al that his lady lust and liketh
And eke to January he goth as lowe
As euir dyd a dogge for the bowe
He is so plesant to euery man
For craft is alle who so that it can
That euery wight is fayne to speke him gode
And fully in the ladies grace he stode
Thus let I dampan aboute his nede
And in my tale forth I wyl procede
Some clerkes holden that felycite
Stondith in delyte and therfore certayn he
This noble January with alle his myght
In honest wise as longith to a knyght
Shope him to lyue ful deliciously
His housyng his arrape as honestly
To his degre was made as a kynge
Among othez of his honest thinges
He hadde a gardeyn walled alle with stone
So fayne a gardeyne wote I nowhere none
For oute of doute I verily suppose
That he that wrote the romaynes of the Rose
Ne coude of it the beaute wele deuise
Ne priapus ne myght nat suffise
Though he be god of gardeyns for to telle
The beaute of the gardeyn and the welle
That stode vndre a laurez alwey grene
Ful oft tyme king pluto and his quene
Proserpyna and alle her feyrye
Disporten them and make melodye
Aboute that welle and daunsed as men tolde

The Marchauntes Tale

This noble knyght this January the olde
Suche deynthe hath in it to walke and to pley
That he wolde suffre no wight to bere the key
Saue he him selue for of the smale wyket
He bare alwey of syluer a clyket
With the whiche whan he lyst vnslytte
And whan he wolde paye his wif his dette
In some season thider wolde he go
And may his wif and no wight but they two
And thinges that were nat do a bedde
He in the gardeyn parfourned it and sped
And in this wise many a mery day
Byuen this January and freshe may
But worldly ioye may nat alwey endure
To January ne no worldly creature
O soden happe o thou fortune vnsable
Lyke vnto the scorpyon so deceyuable
That flaterst with thy hede when thou wilt styng
Thy taylor is deth throughe thy enuemyng
O brotyl ioye o thou suete popson queynthe
O tohu monster that subtelly canst peynthe
Thy giftes vndre he we of stedefastnes
That thou deceyuest bothe more and lesse
Why hast thou January thus deceyued
That haddest him for thy frende rescyued
And now thou hast beraft bothe his eyen
For sorowe of whiche he desireth to dyen
Alas this January that is so fre
Amyd his lust and his prosperite
Is now woxen blynde and that al sodensly
He wepeth and he wayleth ppytously
And therewithalle the fyre of jelousye
Rest that his wif shalle fal in some folye

The Sparchauntes Tale

So brent his hert that he wolde fayne
That some man bothe him and her hadde slayne
For neuiz after his deth ne his lyf
Ne wolde he that she were loue ne wyf
But euirlyue as a widowe in clothes blake
Sool as the turtyl that hath lost her make
But at the last after a moneth or twey
His sorowe gan to swage soth to sey
For he wpyt it may none othez be
He paciently toke his aduersite
Saue oute of doute may he nat forgoon
That he ne was ielous euir more in oon
Whiche ielousye it was so outrageous
That neither in halle ne in othez hous
Ne in none othez place neuiz the moo
He wolde suffre her for to ryde ne go
But if that he hadde honde on her alwey
For whiche ful ofte wepyth fresshe may
That loueth Dampyan so tenderly
That she must othez dye sodenly
Or elles she must haue him at her leste
She wayteth whan her hert wolde to brest
Vpon that othez syde this dampyan
Becomen is the soroufullest man
That euir was for neither nyght ne day
Ne myght he speke a worde with fresshe may
As of his purpos of none suche mateze
But if that January must it here
That hadde an honde vpon her euir mo'
But neuirthelesse by writyng to and fro
And pryue signes wpyt he what she ment
And she knewe of the same his entent
O January what myght it the auayle

The Marchauntes Tale

Though thou myghtst se as fer as ship doth sayle
For as gode blynde is deceyued to be
As to be deceyued whan a man may se
So argus whiche that hadde an hundreth eyen
For al that euiz he coude poure or pryen
yet was he blent and god wote so be mo
That wenyn wele that it is no thing so
Passe ouiz this and ease I say nomore
This freshe may of whiche I spake of yore
In warm wex hath prentyd this clyket
That January haaz of the smale wyket
By whiche vnto his gardeyn oft he went
And Dampayn that knewe her entent
The clyket countrefetyd pryuelly
There is nomore to say but hastely
Some wondre by this clyket shal be tyde
Whiche ye shal here if ye wyl abyde
O noble ouyde soth sayest thou god wote
What sight it is though it be long and hote
That he nyl fynde it oute in some manere
By pryamus and tysby may men here
Though they were kept streyt long ouiz alle
They been accorded rownyng throughe a walke
There no wight coude haue founde suche a sight
But now to purpos or that daies eyght
Were passed or the moneth of July besyde
That January hath caughte so grete a wyllie
Throughe eggyng of his wif him for to pley
In his gardeyn and no wight but they twey
That in a morowe vnto this may sayde he
Wyse by my wif my loue my lady fre
The turteles boyce I herd my spouse swete
The wynter is gone with his raynes wete

The Marchauntes Tale

Come forth With thyn eyen columbyne
Now fayrer been thy eyen than is Wyne
The gardeyne is closed al aboute
Come forth my swete spouse oute of doute
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte o Wyf
No spot of the ne kene we I in al my lyf
Come forth and let vs take oure disporte
I chees the for my Wyf and for my comforte
Suche olde lewde wordes vsed he
On dampen a signe made she
That he sholde go biforne With his clyket
This Dampen hath opned the Wyket
And in he stert and that in suche manere
That no Wight myght it see ne here
And styll he sat vndre a busshe anone
This January is blynde as is a stone
With may in his honde and no Wight moo
In to this freshe gardeyn is he goo
And clapped to the Wyket sodenly
Now wif quod he here nys but thou and I
That art the creature that I best loue
For by that lorde that sytteth vs al aboue
I hadde leuyd right now we dye on a knyf
Chan the offenden myn owne dere Wyf
For goddes sake thynke hou I the chese
Nat for couetyse ne othez gode doutles
But only for the loue I hadde to the
And though that I be olde and may nat se
Be to me trewe and I Wyl tel the why
Certes thre thinges shulde ye Wynne therby
First loue of crist and to poure selue honoure
And alle myn heritage bothe touen and toure
I yeue it you makith charters as you lyst

The Marchauntes Tale

This shal be do to morowe or the sonne riste
So wisely god my soule brynge to blys
And I pray you of couenaunt ye me kyss
And though I be ielous wyte me nought
ye be so depe prynted in my thought
That whan I considere youre beaute
And therwith al the vntyphly eld of me
I may nat certes though I shulde dye
Forbere to been oute of youre companye
For berry loue this is withouten doute
Now kyss me wyf and let vs roume aboute
This fresshe may whan she the wordes herde
Benygneley to January aunswerde
But first and forward she began to wepe
I haue quod she a soule for to kepe
As wele as ye and also myn honoure
And of my wifhode that tendre floure
Whiche that I haue assured in youre honde
Whan that the preest to you my body bonde
Wherfore I wyl aunswere in this manere
With the leue of you my lord so dere
I pray to god that neuiz da we that day
That I ne sterue as foule as woman may
If euir I do to my kynne that shame
Or elles that I empeyre so my name
That I be fals and if I do that lacke
Do stripe me and put me in a sache
And in the next ryuez do me drenche
I am a gentyl woman and no wynche
Why speke ye thus but men be euir vntreue
And women haue repreef of you ay ne we
ye can none othez comunycacioun I leue
But speke to vs of Entrust and vs repute

The Marchauntes Tale

And with that worde she sawe where Dampayn
Sat in a busshe and knele he began
And with her fynghers signes made she
That dampayn sholde clymbe vp on a tre
That charged was with frute and vp he went
For verely he knewe al her entent
And euery signe that she coude make
Wele bet than January her owne make
For in a lettre she hadde tolde him al
Of this matere how he wirche shalle
And thus I let him spt in the perpe
And January with may roumpng mery
B Right was the sonne and blewe the firmament
Phebus of golde doune his beames hath sent
To gladen every floure with his warmnesse
He was that tyme in geminis as I gesse
But lytel fro his declynacioun
Of Cancer iouis exaltacioun
And so it fyl in a bright morowe tyde
That in the garden on the ferther syde
Pluto that is king of the feyrre
And many a lady in his company
Folowing his wif the quene proserpyne
Eche after othez right as any lyne
Whiles that she gadred floures in a mede
In claudyan ye may the stozres rede
How in his gryfely carte he her sette
This kynng of feyrre adoun him sette
Upon a benche of turues fayre and grene
And right anone sayde he thus to his quene
My wif quod he thez may no witht say nay
The experyence so proueth it euery day
The treason whiche that women do to man

The Marchantes Tale

Ten hundreth thousand tellen I can
Ensamplis and of youre vntrouthe & Brotylnesse
O Salamon wise and richest of alle richesse
Fulfilled of sapience and of worldly glory
Wele worthy be thy wordes in memory
To euery wight that wyt and reason can
Thus pryseth he yet the bounte of man
Among a thousand men yet fonde I one
But of alle women yet fonde he neuiz none
Thus sayd the king that so knowith your wikednes
And Iesus filius Sirach as I gesse
He spekith of you but seldyn reuerence
A wyldre fyre and a corrupte pestilence
So falle on youre bodies yet to nyght
Ne se ye nat this honourable knyght
Bicause allas that he is blynde and olde
His owne man shal make him cokcolde
Po where he sitteth the lichoure in the tre
Now wol I grannte of my magestye
Vnto this olde blynde worthy knyght
That he shal haue agayn his eyen sight
Whan that his wif wolde do him felony
Than shal he knowe alle her herlotry
Bothe in reproof of her and othez mo
ye shal quod Proserpina and wil ye so
Now by my modris soule sir I were
That I shal yeue her sufficiant aunswere
And al women after for her sake
Though they be in any tyllt y take
With face bolde they shal thim selue excuse
And bere him down that wolde them accuse
For lacke of annswere none of them shal dyen
Al hadde he seen a thing with bothe his eyen

The Marchauntes Tale

yet shal we women so bisage it hardely
And wepe and sweere and chide subtelly
So that ye men shal be as lewde as gees
What reckith me of youre auctoritees
I wote wele this Iewe this Salamon
Fonde of vs women mo foules than one
But though he ne fonde no gode woman
yet haue ther founde many a nother man
Women fulle true ful gode and vertuous
Wytnes of them that duelle in cristes house
With martyrdom they preynd their constaunce
The Romayne gestes eke make remembraunce
Of many a very true wif also
But sif ne be nat wrothe also
Al though he sayde he fonde no gode woman
I pray you take the sentence of the man
He ment thus that in souerayne bounte
Nys none but god that sitteth in trinyte
By for very god that nys but one
What make ye so moche of Salamone
What though he made a temple goddes house
What though he were riche and glorjus
So made he eke a temple of false goddes
How myght he do a thing that more forhode is
Parde as fayre as ye his name enplastre
He was a lechoure and eke an ydola stre
And in his elde he very god forsoke
And if god ne hadde as sayeth the boke
yspared for his faders sake he sholde
Haue lost his reigne rather than he wolde
I yeue righth nought of alle the belony
That he of women writeth a butter slye
I am a woman nedes I must speke

The Marchantes Tale

Or elles swelle tyl my herte to breke
For sithen ye say that we be iangelereffes
As euir I mot broke hole my tresses
I shal nat spare nowe for no curtesye
To speke him harme that wolde vs belony
Dame quod this pluto be ne lenger wrothe
I yeue it vp but sithen I swere myn oth
That a wyl graunte him his sight ageyn
My worde shal stonde I say you certayn
I am a kyng it sytteth me nat to lye
And I a quene quod she of the feyrre
Her aunswere shal she haue I vnder take
Let vs no moo wordes herof make
For soth I wyl you no lenger contrary
Now let vs turne agayn to January
That in the gardeyn with his freshe may
Syngeth ful meryer than the popyngeay
you loue I best and shal and othez none
So longt aboute the aleys is he gone
Tyl he was come a penynt that ilke pery
Where as this Dampyan sytteth ful mery
And high amongt the freshe leuys grene
This freshe may that is so bright and shene
Gan for to sigh and sayde allas my syde
Now sir quod she for aught that may betyde
I must haue of the perys that I se
Or I must dye so soze longtith me
To ete of the smale perys grene
Helpe for her loue that is of heuyn quene
I telle you wele a woman in my plyte
May haue in frute so grete an appetyte
That she may dye but she of it haue
Allas quod he that I ne hadde here a knaue

The Marchauntes Tale

That coude clymbe allas allas quod he
But I am blynde ye sir no force quod she
But wolde ye bouchsauf for goddes sake
The pery within youre armes for to take
For wele I wote that ye mystrust me
Than sholde I clymbe wele ynough quod she
So I my fete myght set vpon youre bake
Certes quod he therof shal be nolake
Myght I you helppyn with my herte blode
He stoupiþ down and on his bake she stode
And caught her by a twistte and by she gothe
Ladies I pray you be nat wrothe
I can nat glose I am a rude man
And sodenly anone this dampan
Gan pulle vp the smoke and in he throny
And whan that pluto sa we that wrongy
To January paue ayen his sight
And made him se as wele as euiz he myght
And when that he had caught his sight agayn
He was no man of thing so fayne
But on his wif his thought was euiz mo
Vp to the tre he castith his eyen two
And sa we how dampan his wif hath dressed
In suche maner it may nat be expressed
But if I wolde speke vncurtesly
Dute helpe allas harzowe he gan crye
O stronge lady hoze what dost thou
And she aunswered sir what ayleth you
Haue paciencce and reason in youze mynde
I haue you holpen of bothe youre eyen blynde
Vp perel of my soule I shalle nat lien
As me was taught to hele with youre eyen
Was no thing bette to make you to se

The Marchantes Tale

Than for to strottyl With a man in a tre
God wote I dyd it in ful gode entent
Strottyl quod he. ye algate in it went
God yeue you bothe a shamyng deth to dyen
He dyd right so I sawe it With myn eyen
And elles I be hantged by the hals
Than is quod she my medicyne fals
For certaynly if ye myght see
ye wolde nat say these wordes to me
ye haue some glemysyng and no perfyte sight
I se quod he as wele as euiz I myght
Thanked be god With both myn eyen two
And by my trouthe me thought he dyd so
ye maas gode syz quod she
This thanke haue I for I made you see
Allas quod she that euiz I was so kynde
Now dame quod he lat al passe oute of mynde
Come doune my leef and if I haue myssayde
God helpe me so as I am euyl apayed
But by my fadre soule I went haue seyn
How that this dampayn hadde by the leyne
And that thy smoke he leyde vpon his brest
ye sir quod she ye may wene as ye lest
But sir quod she a man that wakith of his slepe
He may nat so sodenly take hepe
Vpon a thing ne se it so parfytly
Tyl that he be wele adawed berzly
Right so a man that longt blynde hath be
Ne may nat sodenly so sone wele se
First whan his sight is compn agayne
As he that hath a day or tweyne y seyn
Tyl that youre sight y satelyd be a while
Ther may ful many a sight you bettyle

The Marchauntes Tale

Be waar I pray you for by heuyng king
fulle many a man wenyth to se a thing
And yet it is al another than it semeth
He that mysconcepueth oft mysdemeth
And with that worde she lept fro the tre
This January who is gladde but he
He kyssith her and clepith her fulle oft
And on her wombe he strikith her ful soft
And to his paleys home he hath her ladde
Now gode men I pray you be mery and gladde
Thus endith here my tale of January
God blisse vs alle and his modre Mary

Here endith the marchauntes tale
And folowith the Squyers prologue

O Oure hoost in his stiropes stondith anone
And sayde godemen herkneith euerichone
This was a sharpe tale for the nones
Siz parisse preest quod he for goddes bones
Tel vs a tale as was thy for ward pore
I se wele that labouered men in lore
Knowe moche thing by goddes dignyte
The parson him aunswerd benedicite
What ayleth the man so sinfully to swere
Oure hoost aunswerde o Jankyn be ye there
I smelle a lollere in the wynde quod he
Now gode men quod oure hoost herkneith me
Abydith for goddes digne passioun
For we shal haue now a predicacioun
This lollare wyl preche vs here somwhat
May by my fadre soule that shal he nat
Sayde the Squyer, he shal nat here preche

The Squyers Prologue

He shal no gospel glose here ne teche
We leue al in the grete god quod he
He wolde soue som difficulte
Dz spryngyn cokyl in oure clene corn
And therfore hoost I warne the biforn
My ioly body shal a tale telle
And I shal clynke you a ioly belle
That it shal wakyn alle this company
But it shal nat be of philosophy
Ne of physlias ne termes queynte of la we
There is but lytel latyn in my ma we

Here endith the squyers prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



a T surrye in the sonde of Tartary
There duelled a king that warred russy
Throught which ther dyed many a doughty man

The Squyers Tale

That noble kynge was clepyd Cambuscan
Whiche in his tyme was of so grete renoun
That ther was nowhere in no regiou
So excellent a lorde an alle thing
He lacked naught that longed to a kynge
As of the secte of whiche he was born
He kepte his lay to whiche he was sworne
And therto he was hardy wise and riche
Pytous iust and alwey pelyche
Soth of his worde benyngne and honourable
Of his coratte as any center stable
yong fresshe strong in armes desirous
As any bachelez duelling in his house
A fayre persone he was and fortunate
And kept alwey so wele ryalle estate
That there was nowhere suche a man
This noble kynge this tartyr Cambuscan
He hadde two sonnes on alphete his wyf
Of whiche the eldest hight Algarsyf
That othez sonne was cleped camballo
A doughter hadde this worthy king also
That yongest was and hight Canace
But for to telle you of her beaute
It lyth nat in my tonge ne in my connyng
I dar nat take on me so high a thing
And also myn englysshe eke is insufficient
It must be a clerke and a rethour excellent
That knewe the coloures longing to that arte
If I sholde discryue her in every parte
I am no suche I must speke as I can
And so besyl this cambuscan
Hath twenty wynter born his dyademe
As he went fro yere to yere y deme

The Squyers Tale

Belect the feste of his natiuyte
Done cry through oute Saray the cyte
The last Idus of Marche after the yere
Phebus the sonne ful ioly was and clere
For he was nygh his exaltacioun
In martis face and in his mansioun
In aries the hote colerpe signe
Ful lusty was the Wether and benygne
For whiche the foules ayenst the sonne shen
What for the season and the yongt grene
Ful loude songe their affectiouns
Them semed to gettyn them protectiouns
Ayenst the swerde of Wynter hene and colde
This cambuscan of whiche I you tolde
In ryalle bestmentes sat on his deys
With dyademe ful high in his paleys
And helde his fest so solempne and riche
That in this worlde was there none it liche
Of whiche if I sholde tel al the aray
Than wolde it occuppe a someres day
And eke it nedith nat to deuyse
At euery cours the ordre of their seruyse
I wol nat telle of their straunge se wys
Ne of their swannys ne of their heronsewes
Eke in that londe as tellen knyghtes olde
Is some mete that is ful deynthe holde
That in this londe men reche of it but smalle
There is no man that may reporten alle
I wol nat tary for it is pryme
And for it is no frute but losse of tyme
Vnto my first tale I wol haue my recours
And so besyl that after the thridde cours
While this kyngt sat thus in his noble ye

The Squyers Tale

Her kynnyng his mynstralles theire thinges pley
Bifore him at his borde deliciously
In at the halle dore al sodenly
There cam a knyght vpon a stede of brasse
And in his honde a brode myrroure of glas
Vpon his thombe he hadde of golde a ryng
And by his syde a naked swerde hanging
And vp he rydeth to the high borde
In al the halle ne was there spoke a worde
Fro meruayle of this knyght him to beholde
And bisely they wayten yong and olde
The straunge knyght that cam so sodenly
Al armed saue his hede ful richely
Saluyth kyng quene and lordes alle
By ordre as they sytten in the halle
With so high reuerence and obeyfaunce
As wele in speche as in countenaunce
That Gaueyn with his olde curtesye
Though he were come agayn oute of fayrye
Ne coude him amende with a worde
And after this bifore the high borde
He with manly voyce sayde his messagge
After the fourme vsed in his langagge
Withoute byce of sillable or lettre
And for his tale shulde seme the bettre
Accordaunt to his wordes was his chere
As techith arte of speche them that it lere
Al be it that I can nat founde his style
Ne I can nat clymbe on so high a style
Than say I thus to the comonentent
Thus moche amounteth alle that he ment
If it so be that I haue it in mynde
He sayde the kyng of arabye and of ynde

The Squyers Tale

My licthe lordc on this solempne day
Saluyth you as he best can aud may
And sendith you honoure at youre fest
By me that am al redy at youre hest
This stede of brasse that easily and wele
Can in the space of a day naturel
This is to say in foure and twenty houres
Where you lyst in droughte or in shoures
Bere youre body into euery place
To whiche youre herte wyreneth for to pase
Withoute wem of you through foule or fayre
Or if you lyst to fle as high in the eyre
As doth an eagle whan him lyst to soze
This same stede shal bere you euir more
Withoute harme tyl ye be there ye lyst
Though that ye slepe on his backe or rest
And turne agayn with wryng of a pyn
He that it wrought coude many a gyn
He wayted many a constellacioun
Or that he hadde wrought his operacioun
And knewe many a seale and many a bonde
This myrroure eke that I haue in myn honde
Hath suche a myght that men may in it se
Whan thez shal falle any aduersite
Vnto youre reigne or vnto youre selue also
And openly who is youre frende or foo
And ouiz al this if any lady bright
Had set her hert on any maner knyght
If he be fals she shal his treason se
His newe loue and alle his subteltye
So openly that thez shal no thing hyde
Wherfore ayenst this lusty somers tyde
This myrroure and this ryng as ye may se

The Squyers Tale

He sent hath to my lady Tenace
youre excellent doughter that is here
The vertue of this ryng if ye wol here
Is this. if that it lyst her for to were
Upon her thombe or in her purse it bere
There is no foule that fleeth vndre heuyn
That she ne shalle vnderstonde his steuyn
And knowe his menyng openly and playn
And aunswere him in his langage agayn
And euery gras that growith vpon the rote
She shal knowe and whom it wol do bote
Al be his wounde neuiz so depe or wyde
This naked swerd that hangith by my syde
Suche vertue hath that what man ye smyte
Through oute his armure it wol herue and byte
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke
And what man is wounded with the stroke
He shalle neuiz be hole tyl ye list of grace
To stryke him with the platte in the same place
There he is hurt that is as mehyl to sayn
ye must with the plat swerde agayn
Stryke him in the wounde and it wol close
This is verzy soth withouten glose
It fayleth nat whiles it is in youre holde
And whan the knyght hadde thus his tale tolde
He rode oute of the halle and down he light
His stede whiche that shone as the sonne bright
Stondith in the courte styll as any stone
This knyght into the chambre is led anone
And is vnarmed and to mete y sette
The presentes be right richely sette
This is to say the swerd and the myrroure
Been born anone to the high toure

The Squyers Tale

With certayne officers demed therfore
And vnto Canace this ryng is bore
Solemnely there she sat at the table
But siberly withouten any fable
The horse of bras that may nat be remeyd
It stont as it were in the grounde y cleuyd
They may it nat oute of the place dryue
For none entynes wyndas ne polpye
And cause why for they can nat the craft
And therfore in the place they haue it last
Tyl that the knyght haue taught them the ma
To boyden him as ye shal after here
Grete was the prees that swermyd to and fro
To ga wren on the horse that stode so
For it so hight was so brode and so long
So wele proporcioned to be strong
Right as it were a stede of lumbarde
Therwith so horsely and so quycke at eye
As it a gentyl poleyn courser were
For certes fro his tayle vnto his ere
Nature ne arte coude him nat amende
In no degre as alle the people wende
But euirmore theire moost wondre was
How it coude go and was of bras
It was a fayre as al the people semed
Dyuerse folke dyuersly they demed
As many hedes as many wyttes thez been
They mozmyd as doth a swarme of been
And maken shylles after theire fante sye
Rehersyng of the olde poetrye
And sayde it was lyke the pettase
The horse that hadde wynges for to fle
Or elles it was the grekes horse Synon

The Squyers Tale

That brought troye into destruction
As men in olde gestes rede
Myghtert quod one is eutrmore in drede
I trowe som men of armes be therein
That shapen them this cyte for to wyne
It were right gode that alle suche thinge were knowe
Another rowned to his felawe lowe
And sayde he lped for it was rather lyke
An apparence made by som magyke
As iogLOURS pleyen at the festes grete
Of sondry doutes they iangel and trete
Asleude people deme alday comonly
Of thinges that been made more subtelly
Than they can in theire lewdnesse comprehend
They demen gladly to the badde ende
And som of them wondred on the myrrouz
That boyn was by in the mayster toure
How men myght in it suche thinges se
An othez aunswerd and sayde it myght wele be
Naturally made by composiciouns
Of aungels and of sly reflectiouns
And sayde that in rome was suche one
They spake of alocey and of bytelone
And of aristotle that writen in theire lyues
Of queynte myrrouz and of prospectatyues
As knowe they that haue theire bokes herde
And othez folke haue wondred on the swerd
That wol perysse through euery thing
And felle in speche of thelephus the king
And of achilles with his queynte spere
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere
Right in suche wise as men may with the swerde
Of whiche right nowe ye haue poure selue herd

The Squyers Tale

They speken of sondry hardyng of metal
And speken of medicynes therwithalle
And hou and whan it sholde hardyd be
Whiche vnknowe is algate to me
Tho speke they than of Canaces ryng
And sayde that al suche wondre thing
Of craft of rynges herde they neuiz noon
Saue that he moyse and king Salamon
Hadde a maner connyng of suche an arte
Thus sayn the people and drawen them a parte
But neuirtheles som sayde that it was
Wondre to make of fern asshes glas
And yet is glas nat lyke asshe of fern
But for they haue knowe it so fern
Therefore sesith thez ianglyng and thez wondre
As soze wondre some on cause of the thundre
On ebbe and floode on gossomer and on myst
And on alle thing tyl the cause is wist
Thus iangel they and demyn and deuyse
Tyl that the kyng kan from his borde aryse
Phebus hath lost the angle merydional
And yet ascendyng was the best ryalle
The gentyl byoun with his aldryan
Whan that this tartyr kyng Cambuscan
Rose from his borde there he sat ful hye
Biforn him goth the loude mynstralcy
Tyl that he cam to his chambre of paramentes
There as they sowyn dyuers instrumentes
That is lyke an heyn for to here
Now daunsen lusty Venus children dere
For in the fyssh theire lady sat ful hye
And lohed on them with a frendly eye
Tyl the noble kyng is set vpon his trone

The Squyers Tale

This straunte knyght is fet to him ful sone
And on the daunce goth With Canace
Here is the reuel and the iolyte
That is nat able a dul man to deuysse
He must haue knowe loue and his seruyse
And be a festliche man as fresshe as may
That shal you deuysen suche arzap
Who coude you telle the fourme of daunses
So vncouth and so fresshe contenaunces
Suche subtel lokynge and dissymlynge
Foz drede of ielousye mennys perseuynges
No man but Launcelot and he is dede
Therfore I passe ouiz of al this lust yhede
I say no more but in this ioly nesse
I lete them tyl men to souper them dresse
The steward bidyth spices for to hve
Andeke the wyne in alle this melodye
The vsshers and the squyers been gone
The spyces and the wyne is comen anone
They ete and drynke and whan this was at ende
Vnto the temple as reason was they wende
The seruyce done they soupen al by day
What nedith me to reherse theire arzap
Eche man wote wele that a kynnges fest
Hath plente to the moost and to the lest
And deyntes mo than be in my knowyng
And after souper goth this noble kynng
To se this horse of brasse with alle the route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute
Suche wondryng was there of this horse of bras
That sithen the grette sege of troye was
There as men sa we suche an horse also
Ne was there suche wondryng as was tho

The Squyers Tale

But fynally the king a shed the knyght
The bertue of this courser and the myght
And prayed to telle him his gouernaunce
The horse anone gan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde honde on his rayne
And sayde sir ther is nomore to sayne
But whan you lyst to ryde any where
ye must trylle a pyn that stont in his ere
Whiche I shalle you telle bit wy vs two
ye must name him to what place also
Or to what countre that ye lyst to ryde
And whan ye come there ye lyst abyde
Byd him discende and trylle another pyn
For therin lyth the effecte of alle the gyn
And he wol down descende and do youre wyl
And in that place he wol abyde styll
Though alle the worlde hath the contrary swore
He shal nat thens be drawe ne bore
And or if you lyst bydde him thens gone
Tryl this pyn and he wol banysse anone
Oute of the sight of euery maner wight
And come agayn be it by day or nyght
Whan that you clepyn him agayn
In suche a gyse as I shal to you sayn
Bit wene you and me and that right sone
Ryde whan ye lyst there is nomore to done
Enfourmed whan the kyng was of the knyght
And hath conceyued in his wytte aright
The maner and the fourme of al this thing
Fulle gladd and blythe was this noble kyng
Repayryng vnto this reuel as biforn
The brydel is to toure y born
And kept among his Jewelles leef and dere

The Squyers Tale

The horse banysshed I not in what manere
Dute of theire sight ye gete nomore of me
But thus I let in lust and in tolyte
This cambuscan his lordes festeyng
Tyl nyght the day began to spryngte

Explicit prima pars
Et sequitur pars secunda

t He noyce of digestiō the sleep
Gan on them Wynke and badde them take hepe
That moche mete and labourē wyl haue rest
And with a gapping mouth he them al byst
And sayde it was tyme to lye adoun
For blode was in his domynacion
Cherisse blode natures frendes quod he
They thanken him galpyngte by two by thre
And euery wight gan drawe him to his rest
As sleep them badde and take it for the best
Theire dremes shal nat be tolde for me
ful were theire hedes of fumosite
That causith dreame of whiche ther is no chartye
They sleppyn tyl it was pryme lartte
The moost parte but if it were Canace
She was ful mesurable as women be
For of her fadre hath she take her leue
To go to rest sone after it was eue
Her lyst nat apalled for to be
Ne on the morowe vnfestliche for to see
And slept her first slepe and awoke
For suche ioye she in her myrroure toke
Bothe of her ryng and of her myrroure
That twenty tyme she chaunged coloure

The Squyers Tale

And in her sleep for the impressioun
Of her myrroure she hadde a visioun
Wherfore or the sonne gan byglyde
She clepyd her maystresse her beside
And sayde that her lust for to aryse
These olde woman that been gladly wise
As her maystesse answered her anone
And sayde madame whether wol ye gone
Thus arely for folke been alle in reste
I wol quod she aryse for me leste
No lengere slepe but walke aboute
Her maystresse clepith women a grete route
And by they ryse wele ten or twelue
Up riseth fresche Canace her selue
As rody and bright as the yong sonne
That in the ram is foure di grees yronne
No higher was he whan she redy was
And forth she walkith easely a paas
Arayed after the lusty season sote
Pyghtly for to pley and walke on fote
Nat but with fyue or syxe of her menyne
And in a trenche forth in the parke goth she
The vapoure whiche fro the erthe glode
Makith the sonne to seme rody and brode
But neuirthelesse it was fayre of sight
That it made alle their hertes for to light
What for the season and the moornyng
And for the foules that she herde syng
For right anone she wist what they ment
Right by their song and knewe al their entent
The knotte why that euery tale is tolde
If it be tarped tyl the lust be colde
Of them that haue it herked after yore

The Squyers Tale

The sauoure passith and euir lenger the more
For folsomnes of his prolixite
And by the same reason thinkith me
I sholde vnto the knotte condescende
And make of her walkyng sone an ende
A mydde a treford reyde as white as chalke
As Canace was pleyng in her walke
Ther sat a faucon ouer her hede ful hye
That with a pytous voyce she gan to crye
That al the wode resounded of her crye
And beten hadde her selue so pyton sty
With both her wynges tyl the rede blode
Ran endlong the tre there as she stode
And euir in one she cryed alwey and shryghte
And with her beke her selue to twyghte
That ther nas tygre nor so cruelle best
That duellith othez in wode or in fozeff
That nolde haue wepte if he wepe coude
For sorowe of her shryche alwey soloude
For ther was neuir yet man on lyue
If that he coude a faucon wele discryue
That herde of suche a nothez of feyrnesse
As wele of plumage as of gentylnesse
Of shappe and alle that myght rekned be
A faucon perettryne than semed she
Of fremde londe and euir more as she stode
She swounded now and now for lache of blode
Tyl wele nyght is she fallen fro the tre
This fayre kynges doughter Canace
That on her synges bare the queynte ryngte
Througth whiche she vnderstode wele euery thing
That any foule may in his leden sayn
And coude aunswere in his leden agayn

The Squyers Tale

Bath vnderstonde what this faucon seyde
And wele nygh for the routh the almoost she deyde
And to the tre she goth ful hastely
And on this faucon loketh ful pytously
And helde her lappe abrode for wele she wist
The faucon must falle fro the twyst
Whan that it swounded next for lache of blode
Alonge while to wayte there she stode
Tyl at the last she spake in this manere
Vnto the hawke as ye shal after here
What is the cause if it be for to telle
That ye be in this fuyral peyne of helle
Quod canace vnto this hauke aboue
Is this sorowe of deth or losse of loue
For as I trowe these been the causes tuo
That causen moost a gentyl hert wo
Of othez harme it rekkith nat to speke
For ye poure selue vpon poure self ye wreke
Whiche preynt wele that othez loue or drede
Must be enche son of poure cruel dede
Sithen that I se none othez wight you chace
For loue of god so do poure self grace
Or what may be poure helpe, for west ne east
Sawe I neuir or nowe byrde ne best
That faryd with him selue so pytously
Ye sle me with poure sorowe veryly
I haue of you so grete compassioun
For goddes loue come fro the tre adoun
And as I am a kyniges doughter trewe
If that I veryly the causes knewe
Of poure disease if it lay in my myght
I wolde amende it or it were nyght
As wys helpe me grete god of kynde

Handwritten marginal notes in a cursive script, likely a later addition or a different version of the text, running vertically down the left side of the page.

The Squyers Tale

And herbes shalle I right ynough fynde
To hele with youre hurtes hastely
Tho shryght this faucon yet more pytously
Than euir she dyd and fyl to grounde anone
And lyth as wone as dede as any stone
Tyl Canace hath in her lappe her take
Vnto tyme she gan oute of her swoune awake
And after that she oute of swoun gan brayde
Right in her ha whes leden thus she sayde
That pyte rynneth sone in gentyl herte
Felyng his symplitude in peynes smert
Is proued alday as men may se
As wele by werke as by auctoryte
For gentyl herte kydeth gentylnesse
I se wele that ye haue of my distresse
Compassioun my faire Canace
Of very womanly benignyte
That nature in youre pryncipales hath set
But for no hope for to fare the bette
But for to obeye to youre hert fre
And for to make othez be ware by me
As by the whelp chasted is the lyoun
Right for that cause and that conclusioun
While that I haue leysur and space
My harme I wyl confesse or I paas
And euir while that one her sorowe tolde
That othez wepte as she to water wolde
Tyl that the faucon hadde her be styll
And with a sigh thus she sayde her wylle
There I was bred alas that hard day
And fostryd in a roche of marble gray
So tenderly that nothing ayleth me
I ne wylst what was aduersyte

The Squyers Tale

Tyl I coude fleye ful bytth vndre the sky
Thoduelled a tarcelet me fast by
That semed wel of alle gentylnesse
Al were he ful of treason and falsnes
It was so wrapped vndre humble chere
And vndre hue of trouth in suche manere
Vndre plesaunce and vndre besy peyne
That I ne coude haue wende he coude fayne
So depe in grene he dyed his coloures
Ryght as a serpent hideth him vndre floures
Tyl he may se his tyme for to byte
Ryght so this god of loues ypcrypte
Doth so his serymonyes and his obeysaunces
And kepith in semblaunce of hys obseruaunces
That so wneeth vnto gentynesse of loue
As in a tombe is alle the fyer aboue
And vndre is the corps suche as ye woot
Suche was this ypcrypte bothe colde and hote
And in this wise he seruyd his entent
That saue the feende none wylt what he ment
Tyl he so long hadde wept and compleyned
And many a yere his seruyce vnto me feyned
Tyl that my hert to pytous and to nyce
Al innocent of his crowned malice
For ferde of his deth as thought me
Vpon his othes and his suretie
Graunted him loue vpon this condicioun
That euermo myn honoure and my renoun
Were sauyd bothe pryue and aperte
This is to sayn that after his deserte
I gaue him alle my hert and alle my thought
God wote and he and other wise nought
And toke his herte in chaunge of myn for ay

The Squyers Tale

But sothe is sayde gone sith many a day
A true wight and a theef thinke nat one
And whan he sawe the thyng so fer agone
That I hadde graunted him my loue
In suche a gypse as I haue sayde aboue
And yeue him my true herte as fre
As he swore he yaued his herte to me
Anone this tygre fulle of doublenesse
Fyl on his knees with so grete humblenesse
With high reuerence as by his chere
Solpke a gentyl louez of manere
So rauysshed as it semed for the ioye
That neuiz troylus ne Paris of troye
Bason certis ne none othe man
Sithen Lameth was that al ther first began
To louen t wo as writen folke biforn
Ne neuiz sithen the first man was born
Ne coude man by t wenty thousand part
Countrefete the sophymes of his arte
Ne worthy to bnbokle his galoché
There doublenesse oz faynyng shold approche
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he dyd me
His maner was an heuy for to se
To any woman were she neuiz so wise
So paynted he his chere at poynte deuyse
As wele his wordes as his contaunce
And so I loued him for his obeysaunce
And for the trouthe y demed in his hert
That if so were that any thing him smert
Al were it neuiz solpke and I it wyse
Ne thought I felte deth at my hert t wyse
And shortly so fer forth this thyng is went
Tyl that my wyl is his wylis instrument

The Squyers Tale

This is to sey my Wyl obeyed to his Wille
In alle thing as fez as reason fyl
Kepyng the boundes of my worshipp euir
Ne neuir hadde I thing so leef ne leuez
As him god wote ne neuir shal nomo
This lastyd lenger than a yere or two
That I supposed of him nothing but gode
But fynally thus at the last it stode
That fortune wolde that he must twayne
Dute of that place whiche I was in
Where me was woo it is no questioun
I can nat make of it discripcioun
For one thyng dar I telle boldly
I knowe what the peyne of dethe is therby
Suche harme I fet that he ne myght beleue
So on a day of me he toke his leue
So soroufully eke that he wende verily
That he hadde felt as moche sorowe as I
Whan that I herde him speke and sawe his hewe
But neuirtheles I thought he was so trewe
And eke that he repayre sholde agayne
Within a lytel while sothe to sayne
And reason wolde eke that he must go
For his honoure and ofte it fallith so
That I made vertue of necessite
And toke it wele sithen it nedes must be
As I best myght I hyd fro him my sorowe
And toke him by the honde seint John to bozowe
And sayde thus to I am poures alle
Be ye suche as I haue be to you and shal
What he aunswerd nedith nat to reherse
Who can say bette than he that can do wers
Whan hath he al sayde than hath he done

The Squyers Tale

Therefore bihoueth him to haue a long sponne
That shal ete with a feende thus herde I say
So at the last he must forth his wey
And forth fleeth tyl he come where he lyst
Whan it cam him to purpos for to ryst
I trowe he hadde the texte in mynde
That al thing repayring to his kynde
Gladith it selue thus say men as I gesse
Men loue of proppz kynde newefanglenesse
As byrdes done that men in cages fede
For thogh thou nyght and day take of them hede
And strawe theire cage feyre and soft as silke
And geue them sugere hony brede and mylke
yet right anone as that his doore is by
He with his feet spurneth doune his cuppe
And to the wodde he wol and wormes ete
So newefangyl been they of theire mete
And loue noueltees of proppz kynde
Nogentylnesse of blode may hem bynde
So ferde this tarcellet allas the day
Though he were gentyl born freshe and gay
And godely for to se humble and free
He sa we spon a tyme a kyte flee
And sodenly he louyd this kyte so
That al his loue is clene fro me go
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise
Thus hath the kyte my loue in hiz seruyse
And I am loyn withoute remedye
And with that worde this faucon gan to crye
And swouned oft in Canaces harme
Grette was the sorowe for the haukes harme
That Canace and alle her women made
They nyst hou they myght the faucon glade

The Squyers Tale

But Canace home berith her in her lappe
And softly in plasters gan her wrappe
There as she with her beke hadde hurt her selue
Now can nat Canace but herbes delue
Dute of the grounde and make salues newe
Of herbes fyne and fresshe of hewe
To hele with the hauke fro day to nyght
She doth her besynesse and al her myght
And by her beddes hede she made a mew
And couered it with beluettes blewe
In signe of trouthe that is in women seen
And al withoute the mew is peynted grene
In which were peynted al these false foules
As been these tydiffes tarcelles and oules
Right for despyte were paynted her besyde
Pyces on them to crye and to chide
Thus lette I Canace her hauke hepynt
I wol as now no more speke of her rynt
Tyl it come est to purpos for to sayn
How that this faucon gat her loue agayne
Repentyng as the story telleth vs
By mediacioun of Camballus
The kynges sonne of whiche I you tolde
But hens forth I wylle my processe holde
To speken of auentures and batayles
That yet was neuiz herde so grete meruayles
First I wyl you telle of Cambuscan
That in his tyme many a cyte wan
And after wol I speke of algarisf
How that he wan theodora to his wyf
For whom ful ofte in grete peryl he was
Ne had he be holppn by the hors f bras
And after wol I speke of Camballo

The Squyers Tale

That faught in lystes With brethern two
Foz Canace or that he myght her wyne
And there I left I wyl agayne betynne

Explicit pars secunda
Et incipit pars tercia

a pollo whryllith by his chare so high
Tyl that god Mercurius house the sligh

There is nomore of the squyers tale

The wordes of the frankeleyn

i N fayth Squyer thou hast the wele y quytte
And gentylly. I pryse wele thy wytte
Quod the frankleyn considryng thy youthe
So felynngly thou spekest sith I allouthe
As to my dome there nys none that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere
If that thou lyue god gyue the right gode chaunce,
And in vertue sende the contynuaunce
Foz of thy speche I haue right grete deynthe
I haue a sonne and by the trinyte
I hadde lyuez than twenty ponde worth londe
Though it right nowe were fallen in my honde
He were a man of suche discrecioun
As that ye been fy on possessioun
But if a man be vertuouus withalle
I haue my sonne snybbed and yet shalle
Foz he to vertue lysteth nat to attende
But foz to pley at dyce and dispende
And lese alle that he hath in his vsage

The frankleyns prologue

And he hadde leuez talken With a page
Than to comyn wight any gentyl wight
Where he myght lerne gentylnesse aright
Strawe for youre gentylnesse quod tho oure hoost
What frankelyn parde sir wele thou wotest
That eche of you must telle at the lest
A tale or two or breken his bihest
That knowe I wele sir quod the frankelyn
I pray you haue me nat in disdeyne
Though to this man I speke a worde or two
Telle on thy tale withoute wordes mo
Gladly sir hoost quod he I wylle obeye
Vnto youre wille. now herken what I say
I wyl you nat contrary in no wise
As fer as that my wytte wyl suffice
I pray to god that it may pleasen you
Than wote I wele it is gode ynow

Here begynneth the frankleyns prologue

t Hese olde gentyl brytons in their daies
Of dyuers auctours maden their layes
Rymed first in their owne bryton tong
Suche layes with their instrumentes they song
Or elles reddyn them for their pleasaunce
And one of them haue I in remembraunce
Whiche I shal say with a gode wyl as I can
But sires bicause I am a bozel man
At my begynnynge first I you beseeche
Haue me excused of my rude speche
I lernyd neuiz rethorpye in certayn
Thynge that I speke must be bare and playne
I slept neuiz in the mount of perna so

The Frankleyns Tale

Ne lerned Marcus Tullius ne cithero
Coloures knowe I none withouten drede
But suche coloures as growen in the mede
Or elles suche as men dyen or peynte
Coloures of rethorpyke be to me queynte
My spiryte felith in no suche matere
But and ye lyst my tale shalle ye here

Here endith the frankleyns prologue
And here begynneth his tale



i N Armoyk that called is Brytayne
Ther was a knyght that loued and dyd his peyne
To serue ladies in his best wyse
And many a labour and many a grette empyse
He for his lady wrought or she was wonne
For she was one the fayrest vndre sonne
And eke therto compyn of so high kynred

The Frankleyns Tale

That wele vnneeth durst the knyght for drede
Tel her his woo his peyne and his distresse
But at the last she for his worthynes
And namely for his meke obeyfaunce
Hath suche appetyte caught of his penaunce
That she pryuelly fyl of his accorde
To take him for her husbonde and her lorde
Of suche lordship as men haue ouer their wyues
And for to lede in the more blisse their lyues
Of his fre wille he swore her as a knyght
That neuir in alle his lyf he day ne nyght
Ne sholde vpon him take no mastrye
Apenst her wyllle ne kythe her ielousye
But her obeye and folowe her wille in alle
As any loue to his lady shal
Saue that the name of soueraynte
That wolde he haue for shame of his degre
She thankyth him of his humblenesse
She sayde sir sithen of youre gentylnesse
Ye profer me to haue so large a reyne
Ne wol god neuir bit wyte vs twayne
As in my gyllt were other warre or stryf
Sir I wol be youre humble true wyf
Haue here my trouthe tyl that my hert brest
Thus been they bothe in quyte and in rest
For one thyng sires sauely dar I say
That frendes eueriche othez must obeye
If they wyl lyue in pease and holde company
Loue wyl nat be constreyned by maystrye
Whan mastrye is come the god of loue anone
Betith his wynges and fare wele he is gong
Loue is a thyng as any thought free
For women of kynde desiren liberte

The Frankeleyns Tale

And nat to be constreyned as a thralle
And so doth men if I the soth telle shal
Loke who is moost pacient in loue
He is at his auantage al aboue
Paciencie is an high vertue certayne
For it benquysshith as clerkes sayn
Thynnges that rigoure shal neuiz atteyne
For euery worde men may nat chide and pleyne
Pernyth to suffre oz elles so mot I gone
ye shal it lerne whether so ye Wyl oz uone
For in this worlde certeyne no wight is
That he ne doth oz sayeth somtyme amys
Ore sekenes oz constyllacioun
Wyne wo oz chaungyng of complexioun
Causith fulle oft to do a mys oz speken
On euery wrong a man may nat be wrekyng
After the tyme must be temporaunce
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce
And therfore hath this wise worthy knyght
Tolpuey in ease suffraunce her behight
And she to him ful wisely gan swere
That neuiz sholde there be defaute in here
Here men may see in humble wise accorde
Thus hath she take her seruaunt and her lorde
Seruaunt in loue and lorde in mariage
Than was he bothe in lordshippe and in seruaige
Seruaige nay but in lorshippe aboue
Sithen he hath both his lady and his loue
His lady certis and his wyf also
The whiche that la we and loue accorde th therto
And whan he was in this prosperpte
Home with his wyf he goth to his countre
Nat fer from penmarke there his duelling was

The Frankeleyns Tale

Where as he lyueth in blisse and in solas
Who coude telle but he that weded had be
The ioye the ease and the prosperyte
That is bitwyte an husbond and his wif
A yere or more lestith this blisful lyf
Tyl that this knyght of whiche I spake thus
That of kayrude was clepyd Arueragus
Shope him to gone and duelle a yere or twayne
In englonde that clepyd was eke Britayne
To seke in armes worshipp and honoure
For alle his lust he set in suche labour
And duelled there twayne the boke sayeth thus
Now wol I stynt of this Arueragus
And speke I wyl of Dozrygene his wyf
That louyd her husbond as her hertes lyf
For his absence wepith she and sieth
As done these gode wyues whan thim lyketh
She moornyth wakith waylith and playneth
Desire of his presence so her distrayneth
That alle this wyde worlde she set at naught
Her frendes that knewe her heuy thought
Conforren her in alle that euil they may
They prechen her they teche her nyght and day
That causeles she sterth her self allas
And every comfort possible in that caas
They do to her and alle their besynesse
To auoyde her sorowe and her heynes
By processe as ye knowen everihone
Men may solong graue in a stone
Tyl some figure therein prynted be
Solong haue they comforted her that she
Receyued hath by hope and by reason
The enprentynge of her consolacion

The Frankeleyns Tale

Through which her grete sorowe began to a swage
She may nat alwey duryn in suche arage
And eke Arueragus in alle this care
Hath sent her lettres home of his weelfare
And that he wol come hastely agayne
Dr elles hadde this sorowe her hert slayne
Her frendes sawe her sorowes gan for to slake
And prayed her on theire knees for goddes sake
To come and come her in company
Alwey to dypuene her derke fantasy
And fynally she graunted that request
For wele she sawe it was for the best
Now stode her castelle fast by the see
And ofte with her frendes walkith she
Her to disporte vpon the banke on hye
Where as she may shippes and barges spe
Salynge their course where them lyst to go
But yet was that a parcel of her wo
For to her selue ful ofte allas sayde she
Is there no shippe so many as I se
Wolde brynge home my lord than were myn hert
Alle warpyshed of his byttre peynes smert
Another tyme she wolde sytte and thynke
And cast her eyen downward from the brynke
But when she sawe the gryfely rocks blake
For very feer so wolde her hert quake
That on her fete she myght nat sustene
Than wolde she sytte doune vpon the grene
And pitously into the see beholde
And say right thus with soroufulte sithes colde
Eterne god that through thy puruauce
Ledest the worlde by certayne ordenaunce
In ydelle as men say ye nothyng make

The Frankeleyns Tale

But lorde this gryssly feendly rockes blake
That sownen rather vnto foule confusioun
Of werke than any fayre creacioun
Of suche a parfyte wise god and a stable
Why haue ye wrought this werke vnreasonable
For by this werke north south west ne est
There nys y fostryd man byrde ne beest
It doth no gode to my wytte but annoyeth
Se ye nat lorde hou mankynde it distroyeth
Ay hundreth thousand bodies of mankynde
Haue rockes slayne al though they be nat in mynde
Sithen mankynde is so faire a part of thy werke
Thou it made first lyke to thy owne merke
Than semyth it ye haue do a grete charite
Toward mankynde but hou may it than be
That ye suche meanys make it to distroyen
Suche meanes ne do no gode but annoyen
I wote wele clerkes wol say as them lyst
By argumentes that alle is for the best
Though I ne can the causes wele know
But that god that made the wynde to blowe
As hepe my lorde this is my conclusioun
To the rhes let I al this disputacioun
But wolde god that alle these rockes blake
Were sonkyn in to helle for his sake
These rockes sle my herte for fere
Thus wolde she say with many a pytous tere
Her frendes sa we that it was no dispozte
To roumpyn by the see but discomforte
And shapen for to pley som where elles
But leden her by ryuers and by wellles
And eke in othez places dilectables
They daunse and pley at the chesse & at the tables

The Frankeleyns Tale

So on a day right on the morowe tyde
Vnto a gardeyn that was there beside
In whiche that they hadde made their ordenaunce
Of vitayle and of othez purueaunce
They gone and pley them al the long day
And this was in the sixte morowe of may
Whiche may hath peynted with her soft shoures
This gardeyn fulle of leuys and of floures
And craft of mannys honde so curiously
Arayde hath this gardyne truly
That neuir was there gardyn of suche pryce
But if it were the berry paradise
The odoure of floures and the freshe sight
Wolde haue made any hert lighte
That euir was born but if to grete sekeneesse
Or to grete sorowe helde it in distresse
So fulle it was of beaute with plesaunce
Anone after dynes gan they to daunce
And song also saue dozzigene allone
Whiche made alwey her compleynte and her mone
For she ne saue him in the daunce go
That was her husbonde and her loue also
But neuir thelesse she must her tyme abyde
And with gode hope lete her sorowes slyde
Vpon this daunce amonge othez men
Daunced a squyer bifoze Dozzigene
That freshez was and iolyer of arraye
As to my dome than is the moneth of May
He syngeth daunsith passing any othez man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
Therwith he was if men sholde him discryue
One of the best fayrnyng men on lyue
yonge stronge vertuouus riiche and wise

The Frankeleyns Tale

And wele beloued and holden in grette pryce
And shortly if I the soth tel shalle
On wyttyng of this Dozytten at alle
This lusty squyer seruaunt to Venus
Whiche that clepyd was aurelius
Hath loued hez best of any creature
Two yere and more as was his anenture
But neuiz durst he telle hez his greuance
Withoute the cuppe dranke he alle his penaunce
He was despeyred nothing durst he say
Saue in his songes somdele worde he wrey
His wo as in a general compleynyng
He sayde he louyd and was beloued nothing
Of suche mater made he many layes
Songes compleyntes roundels vircayes
How that he durst nat his sorowe tel
But languyng as a fure doth in helle
And dpe he sayde he must as dpyd Echo
For Narcisus that durst nat telle his woo
In othez maner than ye here now say
He durst he nat his wo to hez be wray
Saue paraventure at festes and at daunses
There yongt folke hepyh theire obseruaunses
It may wele been he lohed in hez face
In suche a wise as men that asken grace
But nothing wpyt she of his entent
Neuirthelisse it happed oz they thens went
Bicause that he was hez nyghboure
And was a man of worshippe and honoure
And hadde knowen him of tymes yore
They fallen in speche and so more and more
In to his purpos drewe Aurelius
And whan he saue his tyme he sayde thus

The Frankeleyns Tale

Madame quod he by god that this worlde made
So that I wylst I myght youre herte gladde
I wolde that day that youre Arueragus
Went ouer the see. that I Aurelius
Hadde gone there I sholde neuiz come agayne
For wele I wote my seruyce is in bayne
My guerdon is but brestyng of myn hert
Madame rewe on my peynes smert
For with one worde ye may me skeep or saue
Here at youre feet wolde god I were begraue
I ne haue as now nomore leysur to say
Haue mercy swete and do me nat to dye
She gan toloke vpon this aurelius
Is this youre wyl quod she and say ye thus
Neuiz erst quod she ne wylst I what ye ment
But nowe Aurelye I knowe youre entent
By that god that gaue me soule and lyf
Ne shal I neuiz be vntrewe wylf
In worde ne in werkes as fer as I haue wyl
I wyl be his to whome that I am knytte
Take this for fynalle aunswere as for me
But after than in pley thus sayde she
Aurelye sayde she by high god aboue
yet wol I graunt you to be youre loue
Sithen I se you so pytously complayne
Loke what day that endlongt brytayne
ye remeue alle the rockes stone by stone
That they ne lette bote ne shippe to gone
I say whan ye haue made the coast so clene
Of rockes that there is no stone y seen
Than wol I loue you best of any man
Haue here my trouthe in alle that euiz I can
Is ther none othez grace in youre honde quod he

The Frankeleyns Tale

No by that lord quod she that maketh me
For wile I wote that it shalle ueniz betyde
Let suche foly oute of youre hert a slyde
What deynthe sholde a man haue in his lyf
For to loue another manns wyf
That hath her body whan so that him lykith
Aureolus ful ofte soze siketh
Wo was Aurely whan that he this herd
And with a sorouful hert he thus answerd
Madame quod he this were impossible
Than must I dye in soden deth horrible
And with that worde he turned him anone
Tho cam her frendes many one
And in the aleyes roumed by and down
And nothing wiste of this conclusioun
And sodenly begonnen reuel ne we
Tyl the bright sonne lost his hewe
For the orison had rest the sonne his light
This is a smoch to say as it was nyght
And home they gone in ioye and in solas
Sane only wretched Aureolus allas
He to his house is gone with sorouful hert
He sayeth that he ne may from his deth astert
Him semeth that he felith his hert colde
Vnto heuyng his hondes he gan holde
And on his knees bare he set him down
And in raunyng sayde this orison
For berry woo oute of his wytte he Brayde
He nyf what he spake but thus he sayde
With pitous hert his pleynt hath begonne
Vnto the goddes and first vnto the sonne
He sayde apollo god and gouernoure
Of euery plante herbe tre and floure

The Frankleyns Tale

That yeeuest after thy declynacion
To eche of them his tyme and his season
And thyn herborowe chaungith lowe and hye
Lorde phebus cast thy mercyable eye
On wretched Aurely whiche am but loyn
Lo lorde my lady hath my death sworn
Withouthe gylte but thy benygnyte
Upon my dedely herte haue some pyte
But wele I wote lorde phebus if ye lyst
ye may me helpe saue my lady best
Now bouche sauf that I may you deuyse
How that I may be holpen and in what wise
poure blissful sustyr Lucina the shene
That of the see chief goddesse is and quene
Though neptunus haue deyte in the see
yet Empresse aboue him is she
ye knowe wile lorde right as her desire
Is to be quyned and lyghned of youre fyre
For whiche she folowith you ful besply
Right so the see desireth naturally
To folowe her and she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and ryuers more and lesse
Wherfore lorde phebus this is my request
Do this myracle or do myn herte brest
That nowe next at this opposicion
Within whiche signe shalle be the lyoun
As prayeth her so grete a flode to brynge
That fyue fadom at the leest it ouer sprynge
The hyst rokke in Armorpe Britayne
And let this flode endure yeres twayne
Than certis to my lady may I say
Holdith youre heest the rockes be a way
Lorde phebus this myracle do for me

The Frankleyns Tale

Pray her that she go no faster cours than ye
I say thus praye youre sustre that she go
No faster course than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at euyful alwey
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day
And but ye vouchshauf in suche manere
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere
Pray her to synke euery rocke a doun
Ynto helle theire owne derke mansioun
Vndre the grounde there pluto duellith in
Or neuiz mo shal I my lady Wynne
Thy temple in delphos wol I barfote seke
Lord phebys se the teris on my cheke
And of my payne haue some compassioun
And with that worde in swoun he fyl a doun
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce
His brother whiche that knewe his penaunce
Up caught him and to bedde hath him brought
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought
Pete I this woful creature lye
These he whether he wol lye or dye
Arueragus with hele and honoure
As he that was of cheualry the floure
Is comyn home and othez worthy men
A blissful arte thou nowe Dorriten
That hast thy blissful husband in thy armes
The freshe knyght the worthy man of armes
That loueth the as his herteslyf
No thing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf
If any wight hadde spoke whiles he was oute
To her of loue therof hadde he no doute
He nat entendith to no suche matere
But daunsith iustith and makith gode chere

The Frankleyne Tale

And thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle
In langure and in turment furious
Two yere and more ley this Aurelius
Or any foote he myght on erthe gone
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none
Saue of his Brother whiche was a clerke
He knewe alle this wo and alle this werke
For to none othez creature certayne
Of this matere he durst no worde seyne
Vndre his brest he hare it more secre
Than euir dyd pamphilus for gala the
His brest was hole withoute for to seen
But in his hert ay was the arowe hene
As wele ye knowe of a surfanure
In surgery ful perlous is the cure
But men myght touche the arowe or come ther by
His brother wepith and wayleth pryuelly
Tyl at the last him fyl in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Diliaunce in fraunce
As yong clerkes that been lyherous
To rede artes that been curpous
Sekyn in euery halke and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
He him remembred that vpon a day
In Dilyaunce in his studye a boke he say
Of magyke naturalle whiche his felawe
That was that tyme a bachelez of la we
Had pryuelly vpon his deske laft
Al were he there to lern a nother craft
Whiche boke spake moche of operaciouns
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone and suche foly

The frankleyns Tale

As in oure daies is nat worth a fye
For holy chirche sayeth in oure beleue
Ne suffreth nat illusioun vs to greue
And whan this boke was in remembraunce
Anone for ioye his hert gan to daunce
And to him selue he sayde pryuelly
My brother warissed shal be hastely
For I am spyer that ther be sciences
By whiche men make diuerse apparences
Suche as the se subtel trettours pley
For ofte at festes haue I herde sey
That trettours within an halle large
Haue made come in a water and a barge
And in the halle rowen vp and down
Some tyme hath semed come a grete lyoun
And some tyme floures sprynge in a mede
Some tyme a vyne and grapes white and rede
Some tyme a castel of lyme and stone
And whan he lyketh it boydeth anone
Thus semeth it to many a manny sight
Now than conclude I thus if I myght
At Disaunce some olde felawe fynde
That hadde the monys mansiouns in mynde
Or other matyke natural aboue
He sholde wele make my brother haue his loue
For with an apparence a clerke may make
To manny sight that alle the roches blak
Of brytayne were boyded euerichone
And shippes by the brynkes comyn and gone
And in suche fourme endure a woke or two
Than were my brother warissed of his wo
Than muste she nedes holde her beheest
Or elles he shal shame her at the lest

The Frankleyns Tale

What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?
Unto his Brothers Bedde y come he is
And suche comferte he paue him for to goon
To Diliaunce that he by stert anoon
And on his wey than on warde is he fare
In hope for to be byssed of his care
Whan they were come almoost to that cyte
But if it were a two furlong or thre
A yong clerke rompyng by him selue they mette
Whiche that in latyn thristely them grette
And after that he sayde a wondre thing
I knowe quod he the cause of youre compyng
And or they furthelz any fote went
He tolde them alle what was theire entent
This Brytoun clerke him asked of felawes
The whiche he hadde knowen in olde daies
And he aunswerde him that they dede were
For whiche he wept ful many a tere
Doun of his horse Aurelius light anone
And with this magicien forth he gan gone
Home to his house and made them wele at ease
Them lacked no bytyle that them myght please
So wele arayed house as there was one
Aurelius in his lyf sa we neuiz none
He shewde them or he went to souper
Forestes parkes ful of wylde dere
There sa we he hertes with theire hornes hpe
The gretest that were euiz sepe with eye
He sa we of them an hundreth slayne with houndes
And some of arowes blede and bytter woundes
He sa we whan boyded were the se wylde dere
The fa wroners upon a fayre ryuer
That with theire haukes haue the herons slayne

The Frankleyns Tale

Tho sa we he knyghtes iustynge in a pleyne
And after this he dyd him suche ple saunce
That he him shewyd his lady in a daunce
In whiche him selue daunced as him thought
And whan this maister that this maggyke wrought
Sa we it was tyme he clapped his hondes to
And fare wele al oure reuel was y do
And yet remeued they neuiz oute of the house
While they sa we al this sight meruaylous
But in his stody there his bokes be
They sytten styll and no wight but they thre
To him this mayster called his squyer
And sayde him thus is redy oure souper
Almoost an houre it is I undertake
Syn I you hadde oure souper for to make
Whan that these worthy men went with me
Into my stodye there my bokes be
Sir quod the squyer whan it lyketh you
It is al redy though ye wol right now
Go we than souper quod he it is for the best
These amorous folke somtyme must haue rest
And after souper fyl they in trefte
What sūme sholde the maysters guerdon be
To remeue alle the rocks in brytayne
And eke from geronde to the mouthe of sayne
He made him straunte he swore so god him saue
Lesse than a thousand ponde he wolde nat haue
Ne gladly for that sūme he wold nat gone
Aurelius with blisful hert anone
Sayth thus fy on a thousand ponde
The wyde worlde which men say is rounde
I wolde it yeue if I were lorde of it
This bargayne is ful dryue and ful knytte

The Frankleyns Tale

ye shal be payd truly by my trouthe
But lokeith now for none negligence ne slough
ye tary vs here no lenger than to morowe
May quod the clerke haue here my fayth to borowe
To bed he goth Aurelius whan him lest
And wele nyght alle that nyght he hadde rest
What for his laboure and for his hope of blisse
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lyffe
Upon the morowe whan it was day
To brytaine toke they the right wey
Aurelius and this magicien him beside
And he descended there they wol abyde
And this was as the boke doth remembre
The colde frosty season of Decembre
Phebus weyed olde and he wed lyke latoun
That a fore in his hote declynacioun
Shone as the burned golde with streames bright
But now in caprycorne a down he light
Where as he shone ful pale I dar wele seyn
The bytter frostes with the slyte and rayne
Distroyed hath the grene in euery yerde
Janus sptteth by the fyre with double berde
And drynkith of his bugle horne the wyne
Bifore him standith the braun of the tusked swyne
And nowel cryeth euery lusty man
Aurelius in alle that euery he can
Doth to his mayster chere and reuerence
And prayeth him to done his diligence
To bring him oute of his peynes smert
Or with a swerde that he wolde slyte his hert
This subtel clerke suche routhe had of this man
That nyght and day his spedde him that he can
To wayte a tyme of this conclusioun

The Frankleyns Tale

This is to say to make illusioun
By suche an apparaunt iogeltype
I can no termes of Astrologye
That she and euery wight sholde wene and say
That of Brytayne the rockes were a wey
Or elles they were sonkyn vndre the grounde
So at the last he hath his tyme y founde
To make his iape and his wrechidnesse
Of suche a superstitious cursidnesse
His tables to tentanes forth he brough
ful wele correctid it lacked nought
Ne yther his ceket ne his expans peres
Ne his rotis ne his othez geres
As been his centris and his argumentes
And his proporzional conuenientes
For his equacions in euery thyng
And by his eyght spere in his workyng
He knewe ful wele hou fer alnath was shoue
From the hede of that fyve aries aboue
That in the nynthe spere considered is
ful subtelly he had calked al this
Whan he hadde founde his first mansioun
He knewe the remenaunt by proporzion
And knewe the rysyng of his mone wele
And in whose face and terme and euerydele
And knewe wel the monys mansioun
Attendaunt vnto his operacioun
And knewe also wele his othez obseruaunces
For suche illusiouns and suche myschances
As he then folke vseden in tho dayes
For whiche no lenger makith he delays
But through his matyke for a woke or tway
It semed that alle the rockes were a wey

The Frankeleyns Tale

Aurelius yet whiche that dispeyred is
Whether he shalle haue his loue or fare a mys
And wayteth nyght and day on this myracle
And whan he knewe ther was none obstakle
That boyded were the rockes echone
Doun to his maisters feet he fyl anon
And sayde I woful wrechyd Aurelius
Thanke you lord and my lady Venus
That me haue holped fro my caris colde
And to the temple his wey hath he holde
Where as he knewe he shoude his lady se
And whan he saue his tyme anone right he
With dredful hert and with humble chere
Salued hath his souerayne lady dere
My right worthy lady quod this woful man
Whom I moost drede and loue as I best can
And lothest were in alle this worlde displease
Nere it that for you I haue suche dis ease
That I must dye here at youre fote anon
Nat wol I tel you I am wo begon
But certis othez I must dye or playne
Ye sle me tyttles for berzy peyne
But of my deth though ye haue no routhe
Adyseth you or that ye breke youre trouthe
And repente you for that god aboue
Or ye me sle bicause that I you loue
For madame ye wote what ye haue hitte
Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of you my souerayne lady but of youre grace
But in the gardyn yondre in suche a place
Ye wote right wele what ye behight me
And in my honde there youre trouthe plight ye
To loue me best god wote ye sayde so

The Frankeleyns Tale

Al be it that I vnworthy be therto
Madame I speke it for the honoure of you
More than for to saue my hertes lyf right nowe
I haue do so as ye comaunded me
And if ye vouche sauf ye may go se
Doth as you lyst haue youre heest in mynde
For quiche or dede right there shal ye me fynde
In you lyth alle to do me lyue or deye
But wele I wote the rockes been a wey
He takith his leue and she astonped stode
In al her face nas there one drope of blode
She wende neuir to come in suche a trapppe
Allas quod she that euir this sholde happe
For wende I neuir by possibylite
That suche a monstre or meruayle myght be
It is ayenst the processe of nature
And home she goth a soroful creature
For verzy feer vnnethes myght she go
She wepith and wayleth a day or two
And swouneth that it routh was to se
But why it was vnto noman tolde she
For oute of toune was gone Arueragus
But to her selue she spake and sayde thus
With pale face and soroufulle chere
In her compleynthe as ye shalle after here
Allas quod she on the fortune I playne
That vnware wrapped hast me in this cheyne
Fro whiche to scape knowe I no socoure
Saue only deth or grete dishonoure
One of these two behoueth me to chese
But neuirthelesse yet hadde I lyue lese
My lyf than of my body haue a shame
Or knowe my selue fals or lese my name

The Frankeleyns Tale

And with my deeth I may be quytte y wys
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf or this
And many a mayde sleyn her selue alas
Rather than with their body done a trespaas
yes certis these stozies berith witnesse
Whan threty tyrauntes ful of cursydnesse
Had sleyn sridon in Athenes at the fest
They comaunded his doughters for to arest
And brynge biforn them in despyte
Al naked to fulfillle their foule desite
And in their faders blode they made them dauuce
Vpon the pauement god geue them myschaunce
For whiche the wofulle maydens ful of drede
Rather then they wolde lese their madynhede
They been pruely stert into a Welle
And drent them selue as the bokes tel
They of Mecene leten enquire and seke
Of Lacedomy fyfty maydens eke
On whiche they wold haue doon their lichery
But was ther noon of al that company
That she nas slayn and with a glade entent
Chees rather for to dye than for to assent
To be oppressed of her maydenhede
Why shode I than to dye be in drede
So eke the tyraunt Aristoclydes
That louyd a mayde hight stymphalides
Whan her fadre slayne was on a nyght
Vnto Dyanes temple goth she right
And hent the ymage in her hondes two
From whiche ymage wolde she neuiz go
No wight the hondes of her myght arace
Tyl she was sleyne right in the place
Now sithen that maydens hadde suche despyte]

To been defouled With mannys delyte
 Wele ougtht a wyf rather her selue to sie
 Than be defouled as it thynkith me
 What shal I say of Hasdribaldris wif
 That at Cartage beraft her selue her lyf
 Whan that she sawe the Romaynes wan the toun
 Se toke her children alle and shipped a douyn
 Into the fyre and chose rather to dye
 Than that any Romayne dyd her belonge
 Hath nat Lucrece slayne her self allas
 At Rome for that she oppressed was
 Of tarquyne for her thought it was a shame
 To lyue whan she hadde loste her name
 The seuyng maydens of Melleseye also
 Haue slayne them selue for verzy drede and wo
 Rather than the folke of galle sholde them oppresse
 Mo than a thousand stozes as I gesse
 Coude I telle as touchyng this matere
 Whan Abradate was sleyne .his wif so dere
 Her selue slough and lete her blode to glyde
 In Abradates woundes depe and wyde
 And sayde my body at the lest wey
 Ther shalle no wight defoule if I may
 What shal I of them moo ensamples sayne
 Sithen that so many haue them selue slayne
 Wele rather than they wold defouled be
 I wol conclude that it is the best for me
 To sie my self than be defouled thus
 I wol be true vnto Arueragus
 Or elles sle my selue in some manere
 Right as dyd Democenes doughter dere
 Bicause she ne wolde defouled be
 D Cedasus it is ful grete pyte

The frankeleyns Tale

To rede hou thy doughter dyed alas
That slough her selue in suche a maner caas
As grete pyte it was or wele more
The theban mayden that for Nichamore
Her self slough right for suche manere wo
And another theban mayden dyd right so
For one of macedone had her ouir pressed
She with her deth her maydenhede redressed
What shal I say of Niceratis wyf
That for suche a caas beraft her selue her lyf
How true eke was also Althebeades
That for his loue to dye rather chees
Than for to suffre his body vnburied to be
Lo whiche a wyf was Alceste also quod she
What sayeth Dmere of gode Penolope
Al grece knowith of her chastite
Parde of Lacedomea is writen thus
That whan at troye was sleyn prothoselaus
No lenger wolde she lyue after his day
The same of noble porcyra tel I may
Withoute Brutus coude she neuir lyue
To whome she hadde her hert alle yeue
The parfyte wifhode of Arthemecye
Honoured is through oute alle Barbarye
D tenta que ne thy wisly chastite
To alle wyues may a myrroure be
The same thing I say of belyea
Of Rodogone and eke balerya
Thus pleyneyth Dorrigene a day or twey
Purposyng euir that she wolde dye
But neuir thelesse vpon the thrydde nyght
Home cometh Arueragus the worthy knyght
And askith her why that she wepith so sore

The Frankeleyns Tale

And she gan wepe euir lenger the more
Alas quod she the tyme that I was born
Thus haue I sayde quod she thus haue I sworn
And tolde him alle the raas by and by
How she hadde promysed ignorantly
The squyer as ye haue herde to fore
It nedith nat to reherce it any more
This husbonde with glade chere in frendly wise
Answerde and sayde as I shalle deuyse
Is there aught elles Dorigene but this
Nay nay she sayde god helpe me so as wys
This is to mekyl and it were goddes wyl
Ye wif quod he lat steppyn that is styll
It may be wele yet perauenture to day
Ye shalle poure trouthe holde by my say
For god so wysly haue mercy on me
I hadde wele lyeuer styched for to be
For very loue whiche I to you haue
But ye sholde poure trouthe kepe and saue
Trouthe is the highest thing that man may kepe
But with that worde he brast anon to wepe
And sayde I you forbede on peyne of deth
That neuir while you lastith lyf or breth
To no wight to telle of this mysauenture
As I may best I wol my wo endure
Ne make no contenaunce of heuynesse
That folke of you may deme harme or gesse
And forth he clepith a squyer and a mayde
Go forth anone with Dorigene he sayde
And bring her to suche a place anon
They toke theire leue and on theire wey they gon
But they ne wist why she thidre went
He wolde no wight telle his entent

The frankelynes Tale

Paraventure an hepe of you þwys
Wyl holden him a lewde man in this
That he wol put his wif in ieopardy
Berknpyth the tale oz ye on him crye
She may haue bettre fortune than you semeth
And whan that ye haue herde the tale, demeth
This squyer whiche that hight Aurelius
On Dozrigene that was so amerous
Of auenture happed her to mete
Ampdde the toun right in the quyrest strete
As she wolde gone the wey forth right
Toward the gardyne there as she hadde hight
And he was to the gardyn warde also
Foz wele he spyed whan she wolde go
Dute of her house to any maner place
But thus they meten by auenture and grace
And he salueth her with glade entent
And asked of her whither warde she went
And she aunswerd half as she wee madde
Vnto the the gardyn as my husbonde hadde
My trouthe for to holde alias alias
Aurelius gan to wondre in this caas
And in his hert hadde grete compassioun
Of her chere and of her lamentacioun
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght
That hadde her holde that she hadde hight
Solothe him was if she sholde breke her trouthe
And in his herte he caught of this grete routhe
Consideryng the best on euery syde
That from that knst yet were him lyuez abyde
Than to do so high a folysshe wrechydnesse
Apenst fraunchise and gentylnesse
Foz whiche in fewe wordes sayde he thus

The Frankeleyn Tale

Madame say to youre lord Arueragus
That sithen I se his grete gentylnesse
To you and eke I se youre grete distresse
That him were lyuez haue shame & that were routhe
Than ye to me thus sholde breke youre trouthe
I haue wele lyuez euir to suffre woo
Than I departe the loue bitwix you two
I you releffe madame into youre honde
Duyte euery surement and euery bonde
That ye haue made to me as here biforn
Sithen that tyme that ye were first born
My trouthe I plight I shal you neuiz reproof
Of none behest and here I take my leue
As of the tre west and eke the best wyf
That euiz yet I knowe in alle my lyf
But euery wif be ware of her behest
On Dozrigene remembreth at the lest
Thus can a squyer do a gentyl dede
As wele as can a knyght withouten drede
She thankith him vpon her knees al bare
And home to her husbonde is she fare
And tolde him al as ye haue herde me sayde
And be ye spher he was wele apayed
That it were impossible me to write
What sholde I lenger of this caas endyte
Arueragus and Dozrigene his wif
In souerayne blisse ledyn forth their lyf
Neuiz after was there angre them bitwene
He cherished her as though she were a quene
And she was trewe to him for euir more
Of these two folke ye get of me nomore
Aurelius that his cost hath al forlorne
Cur sith the tyme that euiz he was borne

The Frankleyns Tale

allas allas quod he that I behight
Of pured golde a thousand ponde wyght
Vnto this philosopher hou shal I do
I se nomore but that I am fordo
My heritage I must nedes selle
And be a begar here I may nat duelle
And shampn alle my kynrede in this place
But I of him may gete som grace
But nathelesse I wol of him assay
At certayne peres and daies to pay
And thanke him of his grete curtesye
My trouthe wyl I kepe I wol nat lye
With hert sore he goth vnto his cofre
And brought gold vnto this philosophre
The value of spue hundred ponde I gesse
And him beseked of his gentylnesse
To graunte him daies of the remenaunt
And sayde mayster I dar wele make auaunt
I fayled neuiz of my trouth as yet
For sekirly my dette shal wele be quyt
Toward you hou euir that I fare
To go a betyng in my kyrtel bare
But if ye wolde wouche sauf on suretye
Two yere or thre for to respyte me
Than were I wele for elles must I selle
My heritage ther is no more to telle
This philosophre sobyrly aunswerde
And sayde thus whan he his wordes herde
Haue I nat holde couenaunt vnto the
yes certis wele and truly quod he
Hast thou nat had thy lady as the lyketh
No no quod he and foroufully he siketh
What was the cause telle me if thou can

The Frankleyns Tale

Aurelius anon his tale began
And tolde him al as ye haue herde bifoze
It nedith nat to reherce it you more
He sayde Arueragus of gentylnes
Hadde leuyr to dye in sorowe and in distres
Than that his wyf were of her trouthe fals
The sorowe of Dorrigene he tolde him als
How loth her were to be a wyched wyf
And that she hadde leuyr haue lost her lyf
And her trouthe she swore through innocence
She neuir erst herde speke of apparence
That made me to haue in her so grete pyte
And right as frely as he sent her to me
As frely sent I her home to him agayn
This is al and some there is no more to sayne
This philosopher aunswerde leue brother
Eueriche of you dyd gentylnesse to othre
Thou art a squire and he is a knyght
But god forbede for his blissful myght
But a clerke coude do as gentyl a dede
As wele as any of you it is no drede
Sir I relese the thy thousand pounde
As nowe thou were copen oute of the grounde
Ne neuir oz nowe ne haddest knowen me
For sir I wol nat take a peny of the
For alle my craft ne for my traualle
Thou hast wele payde for my bytaye
It is ynough fare wele and haue gode day
And toke his horse and forth he goth his wey
Ordynge this question than aske I you
Whiche was the moost fre as thynkith you
Now tellith me oz that ye furthre wende
I can no more my tale is at an ende

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Here endith the fraunkleyns tale
And folowith the prologe of the wyf of Bathes



e xperience though none auctorite
Were in this worlde is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage
But lordes sithen I t welue yere was of age
Thanked be god that is eternalle onlyue
Husbondes at the chirche doze haue I had fyue
If I so ofte myght haue wedded be
And al were worthy men in their degre
But me was tolde nat long a go y wys
That sithen crist went n. uiz but onys
To weddyng in the Cane of galile
That by the same ensample taught he me
That I ne wedded shulde be but onys
To he whiche a sharpe worde for the nones
Beside a wellle Jesus god and man

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Spake in reproof of the samaritan
Thou hast had fyue husbondes sayd he
And that ilke man that now hath the
Is nat thy husbonde thus he sayde certayne
What he ment therby I can nat sayn
But that I aske why the fyfte man
Was nat husbonde to the samaritan
How many myght he haue in mariage
yet herde I neuiz telle, in myn age
Of this nombre verzy diffinicion
Men may deme and glose by and down
But wele I wote expresse withouten lye
That god had vs wey and multiplie
That gentyl texte can I wele vnderstond
Eke wele I wote he sayde that myr husbonde
Sholde leue fader and modre and take to me
But of nombre no mencion made he
Of bytgame oz of octogame
Why sholde men speke of it belonge
Eo here the wyse kynig dan Salamon
I trowe he had wyues mo than one
As wolde to god it leful were to me
To haue refresshyng half so oft as he
Whiche a pest of god had he for al his wyues
Noman hath suche that in this worlde on lyue is
God wote this noble king as to my wytte
The first nyght had many a mery fyte
With eche of them so wele was him on lyue
ye blessyd be god that I haue hadde fyue
Of whiche I haue pyched oute the best
Bothe of their neyther purse and eke their chest
Dyuerse scoles makith parfytte clerkes
And dyuerse practyke in many sondry werkes

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Makith the Werkman parfytte sikerly
Of fyue husbondes scolyng am I
Welcome the sixte whan that euir he shal
Frozoth I Wyl nat kepe me chast in al
Whan my husbonde is fro the Worlde y gone
Some cristen man shal wedde me anone
Foz the appostole sayth that I am fre
To wedde a goddes half where it lyketh me
He sayth to be wedded it is no synne
Better it is to be wedded than to brenne
What reckith me though men say belony
Of shrewde Lameth and of his bygamyne
I wote Abraham was a ful holy man
And eke Jacob as fer as euir I here can
And eche of them hadde mo wyues than two
And many a nother holy man also
Where can ye say in any maner age
That euir god defended mariage
By expresse wordes I pray you telle me
Or where comaunded he euir virgynite
I woot as wele as ye it is no drede
The appostel whan he spake of madynhede
He sayde that therof precept hadde he none
Men may counseyle a woman to be one
But counseyl is no maner comaundment
He puttith that in oure owne iugement
Foz hadde god comaunded madynhede
Than had he dampned weddyng oute of drede
And certis if there nere no sede y so we
Virgynyte what sholde therof growe
Paule durst nat comaunde at the leste
A thing whiche his mayster yaued none heste
The darte is set vpon virgynyte

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Cache who so may who rennyth best let se
But this worde is nat take of euery Wight
But there as god wol yeue it of his myght
I wote wele the appostel was a mayde
But natheles though he wrote and sayde
He wolde euery Wight were suche as he
Al is but counseyl to birtynite
And for to be a wyf he yaued me leue
Of indulgence so it be nat to repreue
To wedde me if that my make dye
Withoute excepcioun of bygamyne
Al were it gode no woman for to touche
He ment in his bedde or in his couche
For peryl it is fyre and to we to assemble
ye knowe what this ensample may resemble
This is al and some he helde birtynite
More parfytte than weddyng in freelte
freelte clepe I but if that he or she
wolde leden al their lyf in chastite
I graunt it wele I haue none enuye
Though maydenhede preferre bygamyne
It lyketh them to be clene in body and goost
Of myn estate I wyl make no boost
ful wele I knowe a lord in his householde
Hath nat euery vessel of siluer and of golde
Some been of tre and done their lordes seruise
God clepith to him folke in sondry wyse
And eche hath of god a propre yest
Som this som that as him lyst to shyft
Virtynite is a grete perfection
And contynence eke with deuocioun
But crist that is of perfection the weller
Had nat euery Wight he sholde go selle

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Alle that he hath and yeue it to the poure
And in suche wyse folowe him and his fore
He spake to him that wyl lyue parfytly
And lordynges by youre leue that am nat I
I wol bestowe the floure of alle myn age
In the actes and in the frute of mariage
Tel me also to what conclusioun
Were membres made of generacioun
And of so parfyte wise a wight y wrought
Trust me wele they be nat made for naught
Glose who so wol and say by and down
That they were made for purgacioun
Of vryne and of othez thinges smale
Was eke to knowe a female from a male
And for no cause elles say ye no
The experience wote wele it is nat so
So that the clerkes with me be nat wrothe
I say thus that they be made for lothe
That is to say bothe for office and for ease
Of engendrure there we god nat displease
Why shulde nat elles men in bokes sette
That man shal yelde to his wyf her dette
Where with sholde he make his payement
If he ne vsed his sely instrument
Then were they made vpon a creature
To purghe him and eke to engendre
But I say nat that euery wight is holde
That hath suche harneys as I to you tolde
To go and vse them in engendrure
Than sholde men of chastite take no cure
Crist was a mayde and shapen as a man
And many a saynt sithen the worlde began
yet lyued they euyr in parfyte chastite

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

But I nyl enuye non birtynite
Let them with brede of pured whete be fedde
And let to vs wyues hote barle brede
And yet with barlee brede as marke tel can
Dure lordes Jesus refreshed many a man
In suche estate as god hath clepyd vs
I wyl perseuere I am nat precious
In wyfshode wyl I vse myn instrument
As frely as my maker hath it sent
If I be daungerous god yeue me sorowe
My husbonde shal it haue both eue and morowe
Whan that him lyst come forth and pay his dette
An husbonde wol I haue I wol nat lette
That shal be bothe my dettoure and my thral
And haue his tribulacioun with al
Upon his flesshe while that I am his wyf
The power I haue durynge alle my lyf
Bothe of his propir body and nat he
Right thus the appostel tolde it me
And bad oure husbondes for to loue vs wele
Al this sentence me lyketh euerydele
Up stert the pardoner and that anone
Now dame quod he by god and by seynt Iohn
Ye be a noble prechoure in this caas
I was aboute to wedde a wyf allas
What sholde I by it on my flesshe so dere
yet hadde I yuez wedde no wyf this yere
Abyde quod she my tale is nat begonne
May thou shalt drynke of anothez tonne
Or that I go shal sauoure werse than ale
And whan I haue tolde forth my tale
Of tribulacioun that is in mariatte
Of whiche I am expert in al myn atte

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

This is to say my self haue be the Whippe
Than mayst thou che se whether thou Wylt sippe
Of that tonne that I the shal Broche
Be Ware of it or thou to nygh approche
For I shalle telle en samples mo than ten
Who so wol nat be Ware by othez men
By him shal othez men corrected be
These same wordes writeth protholome
Rede in his almetgest and take it there
Dame I wolde praye you if poure Wyl were
Sayde this pardonere as ye began
Tel forth poure tale spare for no man
And teche vs yong men of poure practyke
Gladly quod she sithen it may you lyke
But that I pray to alle this company
If that I speke after my fantesy
As take nat a greef of that I say
For myn entent is but for to play
Now sires than wol I telle you forth my tale
As euyr I must drynke wyne or ale
I shal say soth these husbondes that I hadde
Thre of them were gode and two were hadde
The thre men were gode and riche and olde
Whneth myght they the statute holde
In whiche they were bounden vnto me
Ye wote wele what I mene parde
As helpe me god I laugh whan that I thynke
How pytously a nyght I made them to swynke
And by my fayth I paue of them no store
They hadde me yeue their londe and their tresore
We nedith nat to do them lengere diligence
To Wynne their loue or do them reuerence
They loued me so wele by god aboue

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

That I ne tolde no deynthe of her loue
A Wyse Woman wol besy her euir in one
To gete her loue ye there she hath none
But sithen I hadde them holly in myn honde
And after they had yeue me theire londe
What sholde I take kepe them for to please
But if it were for my profet or for myn ease
I helde them so a werke by my fey
That many a nyght they song wele a wey
The bacon was nat fet for them I trowe
That som man hath in Essex at donmowe
I gouerned them so wele after my lawe
That eche of them ful blissful was and fa we
To brynge me gay thynges fro the fayre
They were ful fayne whan I spake to them fayre
For god it wote I chydde them spytoufly
Now herke hou I bare me propirly
ye wise wyues that can vnderstonde
Thus sholde ye spekyng and bere them on honde
For half so holdly can there no man
Swere and lye as a woman can
I say nat this by wyues that been wyse
But if it be whan they them mysauyse
A wyse wyf if that she can her gode
Shal bere him on honde the cow is wode
And take wytnesse of her owen mayde
Of her assent but herketh what I sayde
Syr olde haynard is this thyn aray
Why is my nyghboures wyf so gay
She is honoured where euir she goth
I sytte at home and haue no thristy cloth
What dost thou at my nyghboures house
Is she so fayre art thou so amououse

The wyf of Bathes prologue

What rownest thou With a mayde Benedicite
Sir olde lechoure let thy iapes be
And if that I haue a gossoppe or a frende
Withouten gylte thou chydest as a feende
That I walke and pley vnto his house
Thou comest home as dronken as a mouse
And prechest on thy benche With euyl preef
Thou sayst to me it is a grette myscheif
To wedde a poure woman for costage
And if she be riche of high parage
Thou sayst that it is a berry turmentry
To suffre her pryde and her melancoly
And if she be fayre thou berry knaue
Thou sayst that euery holoure wol her hate
She may no while in chastite abyde
That is assayled on euery syde
Thou sayst some folke desire vs for richesse
Som for oure shappe and som for oure fayrnesse
And som for she can othez synge or daunce
And som for gentylnesse or for daliaunce
Som for her hondes and her armes smale
Thus goth alle to the deuyll by the tale
Thou sayst men may nat hepe a castel walke
It may so long assayled be ouir alle
And if she be foule thou sayst that she
Couetyth euery man that she may se
For as a spaynel she wolde on him lepe
Tyl she may fynde som man her to chepe
Ne none so gryp goos goth ther in the lake
As sayst thou wol be withoute her make
And sayst it is an harde thyng for to wolde
A thyng that noman wol his thanke holde
Thus sayst thou borelle whan thou gost to bedde

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And that no wise man nedith for to wedde
Ne noman that entendith vnto heuy
With wylde thundre dynte and fyre leuy
Goote thyn welked necke be to broke
Thou sayst a droppynge house and eke smoke
And chydyng wyues maken men flee
Dute of theire houses atones a benedicite
What apleth suche an olde man for to chyde
Thou sayst we wyues wyl oure bices hyde
Tyl we be fast and than we wol them she we
Wele may that be a prouerbe of a shre we
Thou sayst that ovyen asses horse and houndes
They been assayed of dyuers stoundes
Ba synslauers or that men them bye
Spones stoles and alle othez husbondrye
And so by pottes clothes and aray
But folke of wyues make none assay
Tyl they be weddyd toolde d otarde shre we
And than sayst thou we wol oure byces she we
Thou sayst also that it displeasith me
But if thou wylt preyse my beaute
And but thou poure alday in my face
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place
And but thou make a fest that ilke day
That I was born and me freshe and gay
And but thou do to my nozpe honour
And to my chambre within my boure
And to my faders folke and myn alyes
Thou sayst thou olde barrelle ful of lyes
And also for that oure apprentice Jankyn
For his crispe herys shynnyng as golde fyne
And for he squyreth me bothe by and down
yet hast thou caught a false suspectioun

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I Wyf him nat though thou were dede to morowe
But tel me this why hydest thou with sorowe
The keyes of thy cheste a wey fro me
As wele it is my gode as thyn parde
What wenyest thou to make an ydiote of oure dame
Now by that lorde that clepyd is saynt Jame
Thou shalt nat both though thou were wode
Be mayster of my body and of my gode
That one thou shalt forgo magre thyn eyen
What nedith the of me to enquire or pryen
I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chest
Thou sholdest say gode wyf go where ye lyst
Take poure disporte I wyll eue no takes
I knowe you for a true wyf dame Alis
We loue no man that takith kepe or charge
Where that we go we wol be at oure large
Of al maner men y blessid moot he be
The wyse Astrologgen dan protholome
That sayeth right thus in his almegeest
Of alle men his wysdome is the best
That reckith nat who hath the worlde in honde
By this prouerbe thou shalt vnderstonde
Haue thou ynough what dar the reche or care
How merely that othez folkes fare
For certis olde dotardes by poure leue
Ye shal haue quente ynogh at eue
For he is to grete a negart that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lantern
He shal neuiz haue the lesse light parde
Haue thou ynough thou dar nat pleyne the
Thou sayst also if that we make vs gay
With clothynge or with precious aray
That it is peryl of oure chastite

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And with sorowe thou must enforzen the
And say these wordes in the apostoles name
In habyte made with chastite and shame
ye women shal appareyلة you quod he
And nat in tressed here and riche perze
As perles ne with golde ne clothes riche
After thy texte ne after thy rubryche
I wyl nat worche as moche as a knat
Thou sayst thus I walke oute as a cat
But who so wol senge the cattes skyn
Than wyl the cat duelle in his in
And if the cattes skyn be slyke and gay
She wol nat duelle in his house half a day
But forth she wol or any day be dawed
To she we her skyn and go a catirwa wid
This is to say if I be gay sir shrewe
I wol renne oute my bozel for to she we
Spr olde foole what helpith the to espyen
Thouth thou pley argus with his hundreth eyen
To be my warde corps as he may best
In feyth he shal nat kepe me but me lyst
yet coude I make his berde so mote I the
Thou sayst eke that there be thynges thre
The whiche thynges troublen al the erthe
And that no wight may endure the ferthe
O leue sir shrewe Jesus short thy lyf
yet prechest thou and sayst an hateful wyf
Rehned is for one of these myschaunces
Been there now none othez resemblaunces
That may be lyke youre parables vnto
But if a sely wyf be one of tho
Thou lyknest eke a womannys loue to helle
To bareynlonde there watez may nat duelle

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Thou lyknest vs eke also to Wylde fyre
The more it Brennyth the more it hath desire
To consume euery thyng that Brent Wolde be
Thou sayst right as Wormys shenden a tre
Right so a Wyf dystroyeth her husbonde
This knowen they that been to Wpues bonde
Lordynges right thus as ye haue vndrestonde
Bare I styfly myn olde husbondes on honde
That thus they sayde in their dronknesse
And alle was fals but as I toke wytnesse
Of Jankyn and of myn nece also
O lord the pyne I dyd them and the wo
ful gyltles by goddes swete pyne
For as an horse I coude bite and whyne
I coude playne though I were in the gylt
Or elles I hadde oft tymes be spylt
Who so cometh first to the mylle first he trynt
I playned first so were oure werres stynt
They were ful glade for to excuse them blyue
Of thing whiche they neuiz agylted their lyue
Of wenches wolde I bere them ful soze on honde
Whan that for suche vnneith myght they stonde
yet tyled I his hert for that he
wende that I of him had so grete cheerte
I swore that alle my walkyng oute by nyght
was for to spy wenches that he dyght
Vndre that coloure had I many a mirthe
for al suche thyng was gyue vs in oure birthe
Disceyte wepyng spynnyng god hath geue
To women kyndly while that they lyue
And thus of one thing I may auunte me
At the ende I haue the bettre in eche degre
By slepyght or force or by som maner thyng

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Or by contynual murmure or truckyng
Nameley a bedde hadde they myschaunce
There wolde I chydre and do them no plesaunce
I wolde no lengere a bedde abyde
If that I felt his arme ouir my syde
Tyl he hadde made his raunson vnto me
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycte
And therfore euery man this tale I telle
Wyn who so may for alle is for to selle
With empty hondes men may no haukes lure
For Wynnyng wolde I alle his lyst endure
And make me than a feyned appetyte
And yet in bacon hadde I neuir delyste
That made me that euir I wolde them chydre
For though the pope hadde sitten them besyde
I wolde nat spare them at theire owne borde
For by my trouthe I quytte them euery worde
As so helpe me god omnyppotent
Though I right now sholde make my testament
I owe them nat one worde that it nys quytte
I brought it so aboute by my wytte
That they must yene it by al for the beste
Or elles hadde we neuir be in reste
For though he loked as wyfde as a tyoun
yet shulde he fayle of his conclusioun
Than wolde I say gode leef take kepe
How mekely lokith wykhyn oure shepe
Come nez my spouse let me ba thy cheke
ye sholde be al pacient and meke
And haue a swete spyced conscience
Sithen ye so speke of Jobbes paciencie
Suffreth alwey sithen ye can so wele preche
And but ye do certayne we wol you teche

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

It is fayre a man to haue his wyf in pees
One of vs two must bowe doutles
And sithen a man is euir more resonable
Than a woman is ye must be sufferable
What ayleth you to gruche and grone
It is for ye wolde haue my quente alone
Why take it to haue it everydele
Petyr I shrewe you but ye loue it wele
For if I wolde selle my bele chose
I coude walke as freshe as a rose
But I wol hepe it for youre owne tothe
ye be to blame by god I say you sothe
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde
Now wol I speke of my fourth husbonde
in my fourth husbonde was a reueloure
This is to say he hadde a paramoure
And I was yong and ful of ragery
Styborn and stronge and plyant as a py
Tho coude I daunce vnto an harpe smale
And syng y wys as any nyghtyngale
Whan I hadde dronke a draught of swete wyne
Metullius the foule chorle the swyne
That with a staf beraft his wyf her lyf
For she dranke wyne. and I hadde be his wyf
He sholde nat haue daunted me from drynke
And after wyne on venus must I thynke
And also sykez as colde engendreth hayle
A licorous mouthe must haue a lycerous tayle
In woman bynolent is no defence
This knowen lechoures by experience
But lord Cryst whan it remembreth me
Upon my youthe and on my iolyte
It tyblith me aboute my herte rote

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Unto this day it doth myn herte bote
That I haue hadde my worlde as in my tyme
But age alas that al wol enuenym
Bath me beraft my beaute and my pythe
Let go fare wele the deuyl go ther with
The floure is go ther nys no more to telle
The bren as I best may now must I selle
Now to be right mery wyl I fonde
Now wyl I telle of my fourth husbonde
i say he hadde a grete dyspyte
That I in any othez hadde delyte
But he was quytte by god and by seynt Iose
I made him of the same wode a troce
Nat of my body in no foule manere
But certaynly I made folke suche chere
That in his owne grece I made him frye
For angre and for berzy ielousye
By god in erthe I was his purgatory
For whiche I hope his soule be in glorye
For god it wote he sat ful ofte and song
Whan that his sho ful bytterly him wronge
Ther was no wight saue god and he that wylst
In many wyse hou soze I him twylst
He dyed whan I cam fro ierusalem
And lyeth y graue vndre the rode beem
Al is his tombe nat so curius
As was the sepulcre of him Darius
Whiche that appelles wrought so substelly
It is but wast to burye him preciously
Let him fare wele god yeue his soule gode rest
He is now in his graue and leyde in his chest
n Now of my fyfte husbonde wyl I telle
God let his soule neuiz come in helle

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And yet was he to me moost shrewde
That fele I on my rybbes alle by rewe
And eniz shalle vnto myn endyng day
But in oure bedde he was ful fresche and gay
And therewithalle he coude so wele me glose
Whan that he wolde haue my bele chose
That though he hadde bette me on euery bone
He coude wynne my loue agayne anone
I trowe I loued him best for that he
Was of his loue so daungerous vnto me
We women haue if that I shal nat lye
In this matere a queynte fantesye
Wayte what thyng we may nat ryghtly haue
Ther after wyl we crye alday and craue
Forbede vs thyng and desiren we
Prees on vs fast and than wol we fle
With daunger vtter we alle oure chaffare
Grete prees at market makith dere ware
And to grete chepe is holden a lytel pryce
This knowith euery woman that is wyse
In my fyfte husbonde god his soule blesse
Whiche I toke for loue and no richesse
He somtyme was a clerke of Wyenforde
And hadde left scole and went at home to borde
With my gossop tho duellyng in oure toun
God haue her soule her name was alysoun
She knewe my hert and eke my pryuite
Bettyr than oure parisshe preest so moot I the
To her be wreyed I my counseyll alle
For hadde myn husbonde pyssed agensst a walle
Or do a thyng that he sholde haue coost his lyf
To her and also to a nother worthy wyf
And to my nece whiche that I loued wele

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I wolde haue tolde his counseyll euerydele
And so I dyd ful ofte god it wote
That made his face ful ofte rede and hote
Foz berry shame and blamed him selue that he
Hadde tolde to me so grete a ppyuite
And so besyl that onys in a lente
So ofte tyme I to my gossop went
Foz euiz I loued to be gay alwey
And foz to walke in Marche Apryl and May
Fro house to house to here of sondry tales
That Jankyn clerke and my gossop Dame alys
And I my self into the feldes went
My husbonde was at london al that lent
I hadde the bettre leyser foz to pley
And foz to see and eke foz to be sey
Of rusty folke what wylst I where my grace
Was shapen foz to be or in what place
Therfore I made my dysitaciouns
To bityles and to processions
To prechynge eke and to pylgramages
To pleyes of myracles and to mariages
And weryd vpon my gay scarlet gytes
These wormes ne these mogghes ne these mytes
Vpon my parel frayde them neuir a dele
And wotest thou why foz they bere vsed wel
Now wol I telle forth what happed me
I say that in the feldes walked we
Tyl truly that we hadde suche daliaunce
This clerke and I that of my purueaunce
I spake to him and sayde that he
If I were wydowe sholde wedde me
Foz certayn I say you foz no bolauce
yet was I neuir withoute purueaunce

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of mariatte ne othez thynges eke
I holde a mouse herte nat worth a leke
That hath but one hole for to stert to
And if that fayle than is al y do
I bare him on honde he hadde enhaunced me
My dame taught me for sothe that sotrlte
And eke I sayde I mette of him al nyght
He wolde haue slayne me as I ley byrighht
And al my bidde was ful of berry blode
But yet I hope trulpy ye shal do me gode
For blode betokneth golde as I was taught
And al was fals I dremed of him right naught
But as I folowed ap my damps loze
As wele of that as of othez thynges more
And now sir let me se what sholde I sayn
A ha by god I haue my tale agayn
Whan that my fourth husbonde was on here
I wepte algate and made a sozpy chere
As byues must for it is the vsage
And with my hynchef I cleryd my visage
But for that I was puruyde of a make
I wepte fullytel I dar vndertake
To chirche was my husbonde born on mozowe
With oure nyghbours that for him made sozow
And Jankyn oure clerke was one of tho
As helpe me god whan that I saue him go
After the here me thought he hadde a peyre
Of legges and fete so clene and eke so fayre
That alle my hert I yaf vnto his holde
He was I trowe t wenty wynter olde
But I was fourty if I shal say the soth
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes toth
Gappe tothed I was but that became me wele

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I hadde the prynte of seynt Venus sele
As helpe me god I was a ful lusty one
And fayre and riche and yong and wele begone
And truly as my husbondes tolde me
I hadde the best quente that myght be
For certis I am alle fully benerian
In felyng and in my hert is Marcian
Venus me yaued my lust and lyherousnesse
And Mars yaued me my sturdy hardynesse
Myn ascendaunt was Taure and mars therein
Alas alas that euil loue was synne
I folowed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertue of my constellacioun
That made me that I coude nat withdraue
My chambre of Venus fro a gode felawe
yet haue I Martis marke vpon my face
And also in an othez pruy place
For god so wysly be my saluacioun
I louyd neuiz by no discrecioun
But euil folowed myn appetite
Al were he long shorte blache or white
I toke no hepe so that he lyked me
How poure he was ne eke of what degre
What sholde I say but at the monethes ende
This ioly clerke Jankyn that was so hende
Hath weddyd me with grete solempnyte
And to him yaued I alle londe and fee
That euil was yeuue me ther bifore
But afterwarde me repented it ful soze
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lyst
By god he smote me onys on the lyst
On the cheke. for I rent oute of his boke a leef
That of the stroke myn ere wext al deaf

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Styborne I was as is a byonesse
And of my tunge a very iangelresse
And walke I wolde as I doon hadde biforn
fro house to house al though he hadde it sworn
for whiche he oft tyme wolde preche
And me of olde Romaunces ghestes teche
Hou the symplcius gallus left his wyf
And her forsoke for terme of alle his lyf
Nat but for onys oppyn heded he her say
Lokynng oute of his doze vpon a day
A nother Romayne tolde he me by name
But for his wyf was at a someres game
Withoute his wyttynng he forsoke her eke
And than wolde he vpon his byble seke
That ilke prouerbe of Ecclesiaste
Where he comaundith and byddeth fast
Men sholde nat suffre their wyues to royle aboute
Than wolde he say thus withouten doute
Who so byldith his house alle of salowes
And pryeth his blynde horse ouir the falowes
And suffrith his wyf to seke halowes
Is worthy to be honged on the galowes
But al for naught I set it nat an haue
Of al his prouerbes ne of alle his olde sawe
Ne I wol nat of him corrected be
I hate them that tellen my byces on to me
And so do mo god bote of vs than I
This made hym wode with me al vtterly
I wolde nat forbere him in no caas
Now wol I say you soth by seint Thomas
Why that I rent oute of his boke a leef
For whiche he smote me so that I was deaf
He hadde a boke that gladly both nyght and day
t in

The wyf of Bathes prologue

For his disporte he wolde rede alway
He clepyd it Balery and Theophraste
At the whiche boke he lough alwey ful fast
And eke ther was a clerke somtyme in Rome
A cardynalle that hight seynt Jerome
That made a boke ayenst Jonynyan
In whiche boke ther was eke Tortulan
Crisippus Tortala and Helowis
That was Abbesse nat fer from Paris
And eke the paraboles of Wyse Salamon
Duydes art and che bokes many one
And al these were bounde in one volume
And euery day and night was his custume
Whan he hadde leyser and any vacacioun
Fro al othez worldly occupacioun
To redyn on this boke of Wyched wyues
He knewe of them molettendes and lyues
Than be of gode wyues in the byble
For trustith wele it is an impossible
That any clerke wolde speke gode of wyues
But if it be of holy seyntes lyues
Ne of none othez women neuiz the mo
Who prentyd the lyoun telle me who
By god if women hadde wryten stozes
As clerkes haue within their Dratozres
They wolde haue wryten of men more wychedness
Than alle the marke of Adam may redresse
The children of mercury and venus
Been in their workyng ful contrarious
Mercury souyth wysdome and science
And venus loueth rpyotte and dispence
And for their dyuerse disposicioun
Eche fayleth in others exaltacioun

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

As thus god wote Mercury is desolate
In piscis Where Venus is exaltate
And Venus sayleth there Mercury is rey sed
Therfore Women of no clerke is preysed
The clerke whan he is olde and may naught do
Of Venus Werkes nat worth his olde sho
Than sytteth he down and Wryteth in his dotage
That Women can nat kepe theire mariage
But now to purpos why I tolde the
That I was beten for a boke parde
Upon a nyght Jankyn that was oure syre
Redde on his boke as he sat by the fyre
Of Eve first that for her wychednesse
Was al mankynde brought to wrechednesse
For whiche that Je su criste him selue was slayne
That bought vs with his hert blode agayne
Po here expresse of Women may ye fynde
That woman was the losse of alle mankynde
Tho redde he me hou Sampson lost his heris
Slepyng. his lemman kytte them with her sheres
Throughe whiche treason lost he bothe his eyen
Tho redde he me if that I shal nat lye
Of hercules and of his Dyanyre
That causith him to sette him selue a fyre
No thyng forgate he the sorow and the wo
That socrates hadde with his wyues two
How Byantippa cast pyssse vpon his hede
This sely man sat styll as he were dede
He wyped his hede nomore durst he sayn
But or the thundre stynt there cometh rayne
Of pasipha that was the quene of Crete
For shrewdnesse him thought the tale swete
If speke nomore it is a grisly thyng

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of her horrible lust and her lychynge
Of Cletemystra for her high lecherpe
That falsly made her husbonde to dye
He redde it with ful gode deuocion
He tolde me eke for what conclusioun
Amphioray at Thebes lost his lyf
My husbonde hadde a letgende of his wyf
Eriphylem that for an ouche of golde
Hath pryuelly vnto the grekes tolde
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place
For whiche he hadde at Thebes a sozr grace
Of Pyma tolde he me and of Lucy
They both made their husbondes for to dy
That one for loue that othez was for hate
Pyma her husbonde vpon an euy late
Enpoysond him for that she was his foo
Lucia lykerousloued her husbond so
For he sholde algates on her thynke
She gaue vnto him suche a loue drynke
That he was dede or it was at morowe
And thus algate husbondes hadde sorowe
Than tolde he me hou that Catumeus
Compleyned hou that fel man Arzius
That in his gardyn growed suche a tre
In whiche he sayde that his wyues thre
Hanged them self for their hertes dyspytous
Deue Brother sayde than this Arzius
Yeue me a plante of that blissed tre
And in my gardyn planted shal it be
Of latter date of wyues hath he redde
That some haue slayne their husbondes a bedde
And leet the lichoure dight them alle the nyght
Whiles that the corps lay in the floze bryght

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And som haue dryue nayles in their brayn
Whiles that they slept & thus they haue them slayn
Som haue yene them popson in their drynke
He spake more harme than herte may thynke
And therwithalle he coude mo prouerbes
Than in this worlde growe grasse or herbes
Bettyr is quod he thyn habitacioun
Be with a lyoun or a foule dragoun
Than with a woman vsyng for to chyde
Bettyr is quod he high in his roof abyde
Than with an angyr wyf down in the house
They be so wyched and so contrarious
They haten that their husbondes loue ay
He sayde a woman cast her shame a way
Whan she cast of her smoke and ferther mo
A fayre woman but she be chaste also
Is lyke a golde ryng on a sowes nose
Who wolde leue or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne
And whan I sa we that he wolde neuiz fyne
To rede on his corsed boke al nyght
Al sodenly thre leuys haue I plyght
Dute of his boke right as he redde and eke
I with my fyft so toke him on the cheke
That in oure fyre he fyl bak warde a down
And bp he stert as doth a wode lyoun
And with his fiste he smote me on the hede
That in the floze I ley as were dede
And whan he sa we hou styl that I lay
He was agast and wolde haue fledde a way
Tyl at the last I oute of my swoune abraide
D hast thou slayn me false theef I sayde
And for my londe thus hast thou muredede me

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Or I be dede yet wol I onys kyffe the
And nere he cam and kneled fayre a doun
And sayde dere sustre swete Alisoun
As helpe me god I shal the neuir smyte
That I haue do it is thy self to wyte
For yeue it me and that I the beseke
And yet est sones I hytte him on the cheke
And sayde thee f thus moche I am be wreke
Now wol I dye I may no lengere speke
But at the last with moche care and wo
We syl accorded by oure selfyn t wo
He gaue me the brydel in myn honde
To haue the gouernaunce of house and londe
And after of his tonge and of his honde also
And made him brenne his boke anone tho
And than whan I hadde goten vnto me
The maystre and eke the soueraynte
And that he sayde myn owne true wyf
Doth as you lyst al the terme of youre lyf
Kepe thy honoure and eke myn estate
And after that day we hadde neuir debate
God helpe me so I was to him as kynde
As any wyf from Denmarke vnto ynde
And also true and so was he to me
I pray to god that sytteth in maggesty
So blesse his soule for his mercy dere
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here
t He frere lough whan he hadde herd al this
Now dame quod he so haue I ioye and blis
This is a long preamble of a tale
And whan the Sompnoure herde the frere tale
Lo quod the Sompnoure for goddes armes t wo
A frere wol entromette him euir mo

The wyf of Bathes prologue

To gode men a flye and eke a frere
Wol falle in euey mannys disse and matere
What spekest thou of preambulacioun
What amble or trotte go pyssse or sytte a doun
Thou lettest oure disporte in this matere
ye Wylt thou so sir Sompnoure quod the frere
Now by my fayth I shalle oz that I go
Telle of a sompnoure suche a tale oz two
That alle folke shal laugh in this place
Now elles frere I beshrewe thy face
Quod this Sompnoure, and I beshrewe me
But if I telle tales two oz thre
Of freres oz that I come to Spydnyngbourn
That I shal make the soze for to morne
For wele I woot thy pacience is gone
Dure hoost cryde pease and that anone
And sayde let the woman telle her tale
ye faren as folkes that dronke been of ale
Do dame telle forth youre tale and that is best
Al redy sir quod she right as you lyst
If I haue licence of this worthy frere
yes dame quod he telle forth and I wol here

Here endith the wyf of Bathes prologue
And here begynneth her Tale

i
In olde dages of kynng Arthoure
Of whiche Britons speke grete honoure
Al was this lond fulfyllid of fayrpe
The elphe quene with her ioly company
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede
This was the olde opunyon as I rede
I speke of many an hundred yeres a goo

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

But now we can no man se none elphes mo
For now the grette charite and prayers
Of lymptoures and other holy freres
That serchen euery londe and euery streme
As thyche as motes in the sonne beame
Blessyng halles chambers kychens and boures
Cyttes borughes castelles and high toures
Thorpes barnes shepens and depres
This makith that there be no feryes
For there as wont was to walke an elphe
There walkith now the lymptoure him self
In vndermeles and in moznynge
And sayth his matyns and his holy thynges
As he goth forth in his lymptacioun
Women may now go sauely by and down
Vndre euery busshe and vndre euery tre
There is none other incubus but he
And he ne wolde do them any dishonoure
And so besyl that this kyng Arthoure
Hadde in his house a lusty bachelez
That on a day cam rydyng fro the ryuere
And happed that allone as he was born
He sawe a mayde walkyng him bifore
Of whiche mayde anone magre hez hede
By verry force he beraft hez maydenhede
For whiche oppressioun was suche clamoure
And suche pursute vnto vnto kyng Arthoure
That dampned was this knyght for to be dede
By course of la we and sholde haue lost his hede
Parauenture suche was the statute tho
But that the quene and other ladies moo
Solonge prayde the kyng of grace
Tyl he hislyf graunted in that place

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

And yave him to the queene alle at her wyllle
To chese whether she wolde him saue or spylle
The queene thanked the kynng with alle her myghte
And after this thus spake she to the knyght
Whan she sawe her tyme upon a day
Thou stondest yet quod she in suche aray
That of thy lyf yet hast thou no surete
I graunt thy lyf if thou canst telle me
What thing it is that women moost desiren
Be ware and kepe thy necke from iren
And if thou canst nat telle it anone
I shal the yere leue yet for for to gone
A twelue month and a day to seche and lere
An aunswere sufficiaunt in this matere
And surete wol I haue or that thou pace
Thy body for to yelde in this place
Woo was this knyght and soroufully he siggheth
But he may nat do alle as him lyketh
And at the last he chose him for to wende
And come ageyn right at the yeres ende
With suche aunswere as god wolde him puruey
And takith his leue and wendith forth his wey
He sekith every house and every place
Where as he hopith for to fynde grace
To wytte what thyng women loued moost
But he coude aryuen in no coost
There as he myght fynde in this matere
Two creatures accordyng in fere
Some sayd women loued best richesse
Some sayde honoure som sayde iolynesse
Som sayde riche aray som sayde lust a bedde
And ofte tymes to be wydowe and to be wedde
Som sayde that we be in hert moost eased

What women desire to know
yt wasseth for in the p. 100
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The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Whan we be flatred and ypleased
He goth ful nygh the soth I wol nat lye
A man shal best Wynne vs With flaterye
And With attendaunce and With besynesse
Been we plymed both more and lesse
And some sayd that we wolde loue best
For to be fre and do right as vs lyst
And that noman repreue vs of oure byce
But say that we be wyse and nothing nyce
For truly ther is none of vs alle
If any wight wol clea we vs on the galle
That we nyl lyke for that he sayth vs sothe
Assay quod he shal fynde it what it doth
For be we neuiz so vicious With ynne
We wolde beholde wyse and cleen oute of synne
And some sayde grete deyte haue we
For to beholde stable and eke secre
And in one purpos stedfastly to duelle
And nat to be wrape that men vs telle
But that tale is nat worth a rake stele
Parde we women can nothing hele
Wytnes on Myda. Wol ye here the tale
Tuide among othez thinges smale
Sayde Myda hadde vndre his long heres
Growthyng vpon his hede two asses erys
The whiche byce he hadde as he best myghte
Fulle subtelly from euery manny sight
That saue his wyf they wist it nomo
Belouyd her most and trustyd her also
He prayed her that to no maner creature
She sholde telle of his foule disfigure
She swore him that for alle the worlde to Wynne
She nolde do that belony ne synne

The wyf of Bathes Tale.

To make her husbonde to haue so foule a name
She wolde it nat for her owne shame
But neuirthelesse she thought that she dyde
That she so long sholde a counseyl hyde
She thoughte it was so soze aboute her herte
That nedes some worde her must a stert
And sithen she durst telle it to no man
Down by the marsshe fast by she ran
Tyl she cam there her hert was in fyre
And as a bytoure blombith in the myre
She leyde her mouthe vnto the water down
Be wrey me nat thou water with thy soun
Quod she. to the I telle it and to nomo
Myn husbonde hath long asshes erys two
Nowe is myn hert al hole now is it oute
I myght no lenger kepe it oute of doute.
Here may ye se though we a tyme abyde
yet oute it must we can no counseyle hyde
The remenaunt of the tale if ye wol here
Redith Dydde and there ye may it lere
This knyght of whom my tale is specially
Whan that he sawe he myght nat come therby
This is to say what women louen moost
Within his brest so soroufulle was his goost
But home he goth he myght nat soiourne
The day was come that homwarde must he tourne
And in his wey as happed him to ryde
In alle his care vndre a focest syde
Where as he sawe vpon a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty and yet mo
Towarde whiche daunce he drewe ful perne
In hope that he sholde som wysdom lern
But certaynly or that he cam fully there

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Danysshed was this daunce he nyght where
No creature sawe he that bare lyf
Sawe on the grene he sawe syttyng a wyf
A fouler wight ther myght no man deuse
Agayn this knyght this olde wyf gan ryse
And sayde sir knyght here forth lyth no wey
But telle me what ye seke by youre fay
Paraventure it may the better be
Thise olde folke can moche thyng quod she
My leue modre quod this knyght certayn
I nam but dede but if that I can sayn
What thyng it is that women moost desire
Coude ye me wysshe I wolde quyte wele youre hire
Plight me thy trouthe here in my honde quod she
The next thyng that I requyre the
Thou shalt it do if it lye in thy myght
And I wol telle it you or it be nyght
Haue here my trouthe quod the knyght I graunt
Than quod she I dar wele make auante
Thy lyf is sauf for I wol stonde therby
Upon my lyf the quene wol say as I
Let see whiche is the proudest of them alle
That werith on othez kyrcchief or calle
That dar say nay of that I wol the teche
Let vs go forth withoute more speche
Tho rowned she a ppystel in his ere
And badde him be glade and haue no fere
When they be comen to the courte this knyght
Sayde he kept his day as he hadde hight
And redy was his answer as he sayde
Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde
And many a wydowe for that they be wyse
The quene her self sittynge as iustise

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Assembled been this aunswere for to here
And afterwarde this knyght was boden tappare
To euery wight was comaunded silence
And that the knyght sholde tel in audience
What thyng that worldy women loue best
This knyght stode nat styl as doth a beest
But to his questioun anone aunswerde
With manly voyce that al the courte it herde
My liege lady than general quod he
Women desire to haue soueraynte
As wele of their husbondes as of their loue
And for to be in maystrye aboue
This is youre moost desire though ye me kylle
Doth as you lyst I am here at youre wyl
In al the courte ne was ther wyf ne mayde
Ne wydowe that contraried that he sayde
But sayde he was worthy to haue his lyl
And with that worde by stert this olde wyf
Whiche that the knyght fonde syttyng on the grene
Mercy quod she my souerayne lady quene
Or that youre courte departe as do me right
I taught this aunswere vnto this knyght
For whiche he pleyght me his trouthe there
The first thyng I wolde him requere
He wolde it do if it lay in his myght
Bifore this courte than pray I the sir knyghte
Quod she. that thou me take vnto thy wyf
For wele thou wotest that I haue sauid thy lyl
If I swere fals swere nay vpon thy fey
The knyght aunswerd allas and wel a wey
I wote right wele that suche was my behest
For goddes loue chees a newe request
Take alle my gode and let my body go

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Nay than quod she I shrewe vs bothe two
For though that I be foule olde and poure
I wol nat for at the metal and the oure
That vndre the grounde lyth or aboue
But I thy wyf were and eke thy loue
My loue quod he nay but my dampnacioun
Alas that euir any of my nacioun
So foule sholde euir disperaged be
But al for naught the ende is thus that he
Constreyned was nedes must he her wedde
And take his olde wyf and go to bedde
Now wolde some men say parauenture
For my negligence I do no cure
To telle you the ioye and alle the arzaie
That at the fest was that ilke day
To whiche thyng shortly I aunswere shalle
I say ther was no fest ne ioye at alle
There nas but heuynes and moche sorowe
For pryuelly he wedded her by the morowe
And al day after hydde him as an owle
So wo was him his wyf loked so foule
Grete was the wo that the knyght had in thought
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde y brought
He walueth and he turneth to and fro
His olde wyf lay symplyng euir mo
And sayde o dere husbonde benedicite
Farith every knyght thus with his wyf as ye
Is this the lawe of knyng Arthours hous
Is every knyght of his loue so daungerous
I am poure owne loue and eke poure wyf
I am she whiche saued hath poure lyf
And certis yet I dyd you neuiz bryght
Why fare ye thus with me the first nyght

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

ye fare lyke a man hadde lost his wytte
What is my gylte for goddes loue tel me it
And it shal be amended if that I may
Amendyd quod this knyght allas nay nay
It wol nat be amended neuir the moo
Thou arte so lothly and so olde also
And therto comen of solowe a kynde
That lytel wondre is though I walow and wynde
So wolde god quod he myn herte wolde brest
Is this quod she the cause of poure vnrest
ye certayn quod he no wondre it is
Now sir quod she I coude amende alle this
If that me lyst or it be daies thre
So wele ye myght bere you vn to me
But for ye speke of suche gentylnesse
As is descended oute of olde riches
That therfore ye shulde be gentylmen
Suche erzogance is nat worth an henne
Pohe who is moost vertuouus alwey
Pryuy and apert and moost entendyth ay
To do the gentylest dedes that he can
Take him for the gentilest gentylman
Cryste wol we clayme of him oure gentylnesse
Nat of oure eldres for their olde richesse
For though they yeue vs alle their heritage
For whiche we clayme to be of hight parage
yet may they nat bequeth for no thyng
To none of vs their vertuouus luyng
That made them gentylmen called to be
And badde vs folowe them in suche degre
wele can the wise poete of fflorence
That hight daunte speke of this sentence
Po in suche maner ryme is dauntes tale

The wyf of Bathes Tale

Ful selden vp ryseth by his braunches smale
Proues of man for god of his godenes
Wol that of him we clayme oure gentylnes
Foz of oure elders may we nothyng clayme
But temporalle thyng that may hurte and mayne
Eke euery wight wote this as wele as I
If gentylnes were plaunted naturally
Vnto a certayn lynatte down the lyne
Pryuy and apert than wol they neuir fyne
To do of gentylnes the feyre office
They myght do no belony or byce
Take fyre and bere it in the derkest house
Bitwyte this and the mount of Caucasus
And let men shytte the dozes and go thenne
yet wol the fyre as fayre ly and Brenne
As twenty thousand men myght it beholde
His office naturally ay wol he holde
Vp peryl of my lyf tyl that it dye
Here may ye se how that gentye
Is nat anneyed to possessioun
Suche folke ne doth there operactioun
Alwey as doth the fyre lo in his kynde
Foz god it wote men may ful ofte fynde
A lordes sonne do shame and belony
And he that wol haue pryce of his gentye
Foz he was bozn of a gentyll house
And hadde his elders noble and vertuouus
And wyl him self do no gentyll dedes
Ne folowe his gentyll auncetours that dede is
He is nat gentyll he he duke he he erle
Fy byleyns synful dedes make a cherle
Foz gentyllnesse nys but the renome
Of thyg auncetoures for their high bounte

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Whiche is a straunte thyngte to thy persone
Thy gentynnes rometh fro god alone
Than cometh oure berry gentylnes of grace
It was no thyng biquedyn vs with oure place
Thynkth how noble as sayth Valerius
Was that Romayn Tullius Hostilius
That oute of pouerte roose to high nobleffe
Redith Seneke and redith eke Boece
There shal ye se expres that no drede is
That he is gentyl that doth gentyl dedes
And therfore leue husbonde thus I conclude
Were it that myn auncetoures were rude
yet may the high god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lye vertuously
Than am I vertuous when I begyn
To lye vertuously and do a wey synne
And there as ye of pouerte me repreue
That high god on whome holy we beleue
In wyful pouerte chees to lede his lyf
And certis euery man mayden and wyf
May vnderstonde that Iesus heuyn kyng
Ne wolde nat chese a byciousse luyng
Glade pouerte is a ful honest thyng certayn
This wol Seneke and othez clerkes sayn
Who so that holdith him payed of his pouert
I holde him ryche and he hadde nat a shert
He that couetith he is a ful poure wight
For he wolde haue that is nat in his myght
But he that naught hath ne couetith to haue
Is riche al though ye holde him but a knaue
Berry pouert is synne propirly
Iuuenal spekieth therof fulle merely
The poure man when he goth by the wey

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Bifore the theuys he may synge and pley
Pouert is hateful gode and as I gesse
A fulle grete bryngez oute of besynesse
A grete amender eke of sapience
To him that takith it in pacience
Pouerte is this al though it se me elenge
Possessioun that noman wolde gladly chalenge
Pouerte ful ofte whan a man is low
Makith his god and eke him self to knowe
Pouerte a spectacyl is as thynkith me
Through whiche he may his verzy frendes se
And therfore sir sithen therin ye be greued
Of my pouerte let me nomore be repreneyd
Now sir there as of elde ye repreue me
And certis sir though none auctoryte
Were in the boke ye gentylles of honoure
Say that men sholde an olde wight fauoure
And clepe it fader for theire gentylnesse
And auctoures shal I fynde as I gesse
Now there as ye say I am foule and orde
Than drede ye nat to be made cockorde
For fylthe elde and foule so mot I the
Been grete wardeyns vpon chastite
But natheles sithen I know youre delyte
I shal fulfyllle youre worldly appetyte
Thees now quod she one of these thynges twey
To haue me olde and foule tyl that I dey
And be to you a true humble wyf
And neuiz you displea se in alle my lyf
Or elles ye shal haue me yong and feyre
And take youre auenture of the reneyre
That to youre house shalbe bicause of me
Or in some othez place may wele be

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Now chees whether that ye lyketh
This knyght auyseth him and syketh
But at the last he sayd in this manere
My lady my loue my wyf so dere
I put me fully in youre gouernaunce
These it youre self whiche may be more plesaunce
And moost honoure to you and me also
I do no force the whether of the two
But as you lyketh it suffiseth to me
Than haue I gotte of you the mastrye quod she
Sithen I may these and gouerne you as me lyst
Ye certis wyf quod he I holde it for the best
Wys me quod she we be no lenger wrothe
For by my trouthe I wol be to you bothe
That is to say bothe fayre and eke gode
I pray to god that I must sterue wode
But I to you be also gode and true
As euir was wyf sithen the worlde was newe
And but I be to morowe as fayre to sene
As any lady empressse or quene
That is bet wyte the este and the west
Doth with my lyf and deth as ye lyst
And so they slepte tyl it was morowe gray
And then she sayde whan it was day
Cast by the curteyn loke how it is
And whan the knyght sa we berely al this
That she so fayre was and so yong therto
For ioye he hynt her in his armes two
His herte was bathed in a bathe of blis
A thousand tyme arowe he gan her kys
She obeyed him in euery thyng
That myght do him plesaunce or lykynng
And thus they lyue vnto their lyues ende

The freres prologue

And par fyte toye and Jesu criste vs sende
Husbondes meke yong and fresshe abedde
And grace to ouir lyue them that we wedde
And eke I pray Jesus short their lyues
That wol nat be gouerned by their wyues
And olde and angry nytgardes in dispence
God sende them sone a verzy pestilence

Here endith the tale of the wyf of Bathes
And here begynneth the freres prologue

This noble lymptoure this worthy freze
He made alwey a maner louryng there
Vpon the sompnoure but for honestye
No byleyns worde as yet to him spake he
But at the last he sayde vnto the wyf
Now dame quod he god yeue you right gode lyf
Ye haue here touched also moot I thee
In scole matere a ful grete disticultye
Ye haue sayde moche gode thyng right wele I sey
But dame as here as ye ryden by the way
Vs nedith nat to speke but of game
And bete auctoritees on goddes name
To prechyng and to scole of clertye
And if it lyke vnto this company
I wol you of a Sompnoure tel a game
Parde ye may wele knowe by the name
That of a sompnoure may no gode be sayde
I pray that none of you be euyl appayed
A sompnoure is a ryner by and down
With maundmentes for fornyacioun
And is y bete at euery townes ende
Dure hoost than spake a sire ye sholde be hende

The freres Tale

And curteys as a man of youre astate
In company we wol haue no debate
Tellith youre tale and let the sompnoure be
May quod the sompnoure let him say by me
What so him lyst whan it cometh to my lot
By god I shal him quyte euery grot
I shal him telle whiche a grette honoure
It is to be a flaterynge lymptoure
And of many othez manerz cryme
Whiche nedith nat to reherce at this tyme
And his office I shalle him telle y wys
Dure hoost aunswerde peas nomore of this
And after this he sayde vnto the frere
Telle forth youre tale myn owne mayster dere

Here endith the freres prologue
And begynneth his tale



Bylom ther was duellyng in my countre
 W An archedekyn a man of high degre
 That boldly dyd wele execucioun
 In punysshynge of fornycacion
 Of wychecraft and eke of baudrye
 Of diffamacioun and auoutre
 Of chirche reuys and of testametes
 Of contracte and of lacke of sacrametes
 Of vsury and eke of symonye also
 But certis lichoures dyd he gretest woo
 They sholde synge if that they were hent
 And smale tythes also were foule shent
 If any persone vpon them pleyne
 There myght a sterte no pecunyal peyne
 For smale tythes and smale offryng
 He made the people ful pytously to synge
 For oz the bisschop caught them with his hoke
 They were in the Archedekyns boke
 And than hadde he through his iurisdiction
 Powez of them to do ful correction
 He hadde a sompnoure redy to his honde
 A slyghter boy was none in Engloude
 For sotelly he hadde his espayle
 That taught him where he myght auayle
 He coude spare of lechoures one oz two
 To teche him to foure and twenty moo
 For though the sompnoure wode were as an hare
 To telle his harlottre I wol nat spare
 For we be oute of his correccioun
 They haue of vs no iurisdiction
 Ne neuir shall terme of alle their lyues
 Petyr so be women of the styues
 Quod the sompnoure. put oute of oure cure

The Freres Tale

Peas With myschaunce and With mysauenture
Sayde oure hoost and let him telle his tale
Now telle forth though the Sompnoure gale
Ne spareth nat myn owne mayster dere
This fals theef this sompnoure quod the frere
Had alwey ba wdes redy to his honde
As any ha wke is to the lure in Englonde
That tolde him alle the secre that they kne we
For theire acqueyntaunce was nat come of ne we
They were al his approuers pryuelly
He toke him self a grete profet ther by
His mayster kne we nat alwey what he way
Withouten maundementes a leude man
He coude sompne on peyne of cristes curse
And they were glade for to fylle his purse
And make him grete festes at the nase
And right as Judas had purses smale
And was a theef right suche a theef was he
His mayster hath but half his duete
He was if I shal yeue him his laude
A theef a Sompnoure and eke a baude
He hadde eke wenches at his retenue
That whether sir Robert or sir Hue
Or Jacke or Kauf or who so that it were
That ley by them they tolde him in his ere
Thus were the wenchys and he of one assent
And he wolde fet a feyned maundment
And sompne them to the chaptre bothe two
And pele the man and let the wenche go
Than wolde he say frende I shal for thy sake
Do stryke the oute of oure lettres blake
The thez nomore as in this caas trauallye
I am thy frende there I may the auayle

The Freres Tale

Certayn he knewe of Brybours many mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two
For in this worlde nys dogge for the bowe
That can an hurte dere from an hole knowe
Bette than this Sompnoure knewe a slygh lychour
Or auoutrez or elies any paramoure
And for that was the frute of alle his rent
Therfore on it he sette alle his entent
And so befyl that onys vpon a day
This sompnoure was euir waytynng his pray
For to sompne an olde wyf a rebyste
Feynyng a cause for he wolde haue a brybe
It happed that he sawe biforn him ryde
A gay yeman vndre a forest syde
A bowe he bare and arrowes bright and kene
He hadde vpon him a courttype of grene
An hat vpon his hede with strenges blake
Siz quod the sompnoure hayle and wele y take
Welcome quod he and euery gode felaw
Whydre rydest thou vndre this grene wode shaw
Saide this yoman wylt thou ferze to day
This sompnoure aunswerde and sayde nay
Here fast by quod he is mynentent
To ryden for to ryse vp al the rent
That longith now to my lordes duete
Art thou than a baille. ye quod he
He ne durst for belony and shame
Say that he was a sompnoure for the name
Depardeuy quod this yeman dere brothez
Thou art a baille and I am a nothez
I am vnknowen now in this countre
Of thyn acqueyntaunce than I pray the
Andeke of Brederhode if that thou lyst

The Freres Tale

I haue golde and spluez in my chyst
If that the happith to come in oure shyre
al shalbe thyn right as thou wylt desire
Gramercy quod this Sompnoure by my feyth
Eueriche in others honde his trouthe he leyth
for to be sworne brethern tyl they dey
In daliaunce they ryde forth and pley
This Sompnoure whiche was ful of Jangelis
As ful of benym been the se verzy anglis
And euir enquiryng vpon every thing
Brother quod he where is nowe youre duellyng
A nother day if that I shal you seche
This yoman him aunswerde with soft speche
Brother quod he fer in the north countre
where as I hope somtyme I shal the se
Or we departe I shal the so wele wys
That of my house ne shalt thou neuir mys
Now brother quod this Sompnoure I you pray
Theche me whiles we ryde by the way
Sithen that ye be a bailly and so am I
Some subtelte and tellith me feithfully
In myn office hou I may moost wynne
And sparith nat for conscience ne synne
But dere brother telle me how do ye
Now by my trouthe dere brother sayde he
As I shal tel the a feythful tale
My wages be ful streyt and ful smale
My lord is harde to me and daungerous
And myn office is ful labourous
And therfore by extorsions I lyue
forsoth I take alle that men wol me yeue
Algate by scight or by byoerence
from yere to yere I wynne alle my dyspence

The Freres Tale

I can no better tel the feythfully
Now certis quod the Sompnoure so fare I
I spare nat to take god it wote
But if it be to heuy or to hote
That I may gete in counsel pryuely
No more conscience of that haue I
Nere my extorsion I myght nat lyuen
Ne of suche iapes wol I nat be shreuy
Stomake ne conscience knowe I none
I shrewe the schryttefaders euerichone
Wele be we mette by god and by seynt Jame
But leue brother tel me thy name
Quod this Sompnoure in this meane while
This yeman gan a lytel for to smyle
Brother quod he wylt thou that I the telle
I am a feende my duellyng is in helle
And here I ryde aboute my purchasyng
To wytte if men wol yeue me any thyng
To purchase is the effecte of alle my rent
Loke hou thou rydest for alle the same entent
To wyne gode thou reckest neuir how
Right so fare I for ryde wol I now
Vnto the worldes ende for a pray
A quod the Sompnoure benedicite what ye say
I wende ye hadde been a yoman truly
Ye haue a manns shappe as wele as I
Haue ye than a fygnre determynat
In helle there ye be in youre astate
May certaynly quod he there haue we none
But whan vs lyketh we can take vs one
Or elles make you wene we be shappe
Somtyme lyke a man and somtyme lyke an ape
Or lyke an aungel can I ryde or goo

The frezes Tale

It is no wondre thyng though it be so
A bouspe iogloure can desceyue the
And parde yet more craft can I than he
Why quod the sompnoure ryde ye than or gone
In sondry shappe and nat alwey in one
For we quod he wol vs in suche fourme make
As moost auayle is oure prayes for to take
What makith you to haue alle this labour
Wel many a cause leue sir Sompnoure
Sayde this seende but al thyng hath tyme
The day is short and it is passed pryme
And yet ne gat I nothyng in this day
I wol intende to wynnynng if I may
And nat intende oure wyttes to declare
For brother myne thy wyttes been alle to bare
To vnderstonde al though I tolde them the
But for thou askith why labour we
For somtyme we be goddes instrumentes
And meanes to do his comaundmentes
Whan that him lyst vpon his creatures
In dyuerse acte and in dyuerse figures
Withoute him we haue no myght certayne
If that him lyst to stonde there ageyn
And somtyme at oure prayer haue we leue
Only the body and nat the soule to greue
Wytnes of Job whom we dyd wo
And somtyme haue we myght on both two
This is to say on soule and on body eke
And somtyme we be suffred for to seke
Vpon a man and do his soule vnrrest
And nat his body and alle is for the best
Whan he withstandith oure temptacioun
It is a cause of his saluacioun

The Frezes Tale

al be it that it was nat oure entent
He sholde be sauf by goddes iugement
And somtyme we be seruaunt vnto man
As to the archebisschop seint Dnustan
And to the appostel seraunt eke was I
yet telle me quod the sompnoure feithfully
Make ye poure bodies in suche wyse alwey
Of elementes. the seende aunswerde nay
Somtyme we seynen and somtyme we aryse
With dede bodies in fele sondry wyse
And speke as resonable fayre and wele
As the phytonysse dyd to samuel
And yet wol som men say it was nat he
I do no force of poure dignyte
But one thyng warne I the I wol nat iape
Thou wylt wete al gates how we be shape
Thou shalt here afterwarde my brotkez dere
Come where it nedith nat of me to lere
For thou shalt by thy owne experience
Conne in the chayre ride of this sentence
Bettyr than birgyle while he was on lyue
Or daunte also now let vs ryde helyue
For I wol holde company with the
Tyl it be so that thou forsake me
Nay quod the sompnoure that shal nat betyde
I am a yeman that knowen am ful wyde
My trouthe wol I holde to the as in this caas
For though were the deuyll sathanas
My trouth wol I holde to the my brotkez
As I am sworn and eche of vs tyl othez
For to be true brotkez in this caas
And bothe we gone aboute oure purchaas
Take thou thy parte of that men wol the yene

And I shalle myne thus may we bothe lyue
 And if that any of vs haue more than othez
 Let him be true and parte it with his brothez
 I graunte quod the deuyl by my fay
 And with that worde they ryden forth the wey
 And right at an entre of a townes ende
 To whiche that Sompnoure shope him to wende
 They saue a carte that charged was with hey
 Whiche that a carter droue forth in the wey
 Deep was the wey for whiche the carte stode
 This carter smote and cryde as he were wode
 What heyt brok heyt scot spare ye for the stones
 The feende quod he you feche body and bones
 As ferforth as euir ye were y foled
 So moche wo as I haue for you tholed
 The deuyl haue al bothe horse carte and hey
 Quod the Sompnoure here shal we haue a pley
 And nere the feende he drewe as naught ne were
 Ful pryuelly and rowned in his ere
 Herkyn my brothez herkyn by thy seyth
 Heryst nat how the carter seyth
 Take it anone for he hath yeue it the
 Bothe hey and carte and eke his capulles thre
 Nay quod the deuyl god wote neuir a dele
 It is nat his entent truste me wele
 Aske him self if that you trowest nat me
 Or elles stynt a while and thou shalt se
 This carter chaked his horse on the croupe
 And they began to draue and to stoupe
 Hayte now quod he that Jesu crist you bles
 And alle his hondy worke bothe more and les
 That was wele y twyght myn owne lperde boy
 I pray god saue the and seynt loye

The frezes Tale

Now is my carte oute of the slouth parde
Lo brothez quod the fende what tolde I the
Here may ye se myn owne dere brothez
The choure spake one thyng and thought a nother
Pet vs go forth aboute oure bygge
Here Wynne I nothyng vpon this cariatte
Whan that they cam somwhat oute of the town
This sompnoure to his brothez gan to roun
Brothez quod he here wonyth an olde rebecke
That hadde almoost as leef to lese her necke
As for to yeue a peny of her gode
I wol haue tweleve pens though that she be wode
Or I wol somone her vnto oure office
And yet god wote of her I knowe no byce
But for thou canst nat as in this countre
Wynne thy costes take here ensample of me
This sompnoure claypd at the wydowes gate
Come oute he sayde thou olde berry trate
I trowe thou hast som preest or freze with the
Who knockith sayde this wyf benedicite
God saue you sir what is youre swete wyl
I haue quod the sompnoure of the a byl
Vpon peyne of cursyng lobe that thou be
To morow bifoze the archedehyns knee
To aunswere to the courte of certayn thyng
Now lorde quod she Jesu criste heuyh kyng
So wysely helpe me as I ne may
I haue be sche and that ful many a day
I may nat go so fer quod she ne ryde
But I be dede so prycketh in my syde
May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnoure
And aunswere there by my proctoure
To suche thyng as men wol appose me

The frezes Tale

yes quod the Sompnoure pay anon let se
Twelf pens to me and I wol the quyte
I shal no profet haue therby But lyte
My master hath the profet and nat I
Come of and lete me ryde hastely
yeue me twelf pens for I may no lengere tary
Twelf pens quod she a lady seint Mary
So wysely me helpe oute of care and synne
This wyde worlde though I sholde it wyne
Ne haue I nat twelue pens within my holde
ye knowe wele that I am poure and olde
Wrythe poure almes on me poure wretche
May than quod he the foule feende me feche
If I the excuse though thou sholde be spylt
Alas quod she god wote I am nat in the gylt
Pay me quod he or by swete seint anne
I wol anone bere a wey thy newe pay
for dette whiche thou owest me of olde
Whan that thou madest thy husbande cokc olde
I payde at home for thy correctioun
Thou lvest quod she by my saluacioun
Ne was I neuiz or now wydowe ne wyf
Sompned vnto poure courte in alle my lyf
Ne neuiz I was but of my body true
Vnto the deuyll blake and rough of he we
yeue I thy body and eke myn panne also
And whan the deuyll herde her curse so
Vpon her knees he sayde in this manere
Now mayst myn owne modre dere
Is this youre wyl in ernyft as ye sey
The deuyll quod she fette him or he dey
And panne and al bu the wol him repent
May olde stot that is nat myn entent

The freres Tale

Quod the sompnoure for to repent me
For any thyng that I haue hadde of the
I wolde I hadde thy smoke and euery cloth
Now brotkez quod the deuyll be nat wrotke
Thy body and this panne is myn by righte
Thou shalt to helle with me yet to nyght
Where thou shalt knowe of oure pryuite
More than a mayster of diuinyte
And with that worde the foule feende him hent
Body and soule he with the deuyll went
Where that these sompnoures haue theire heritage
And god that made after his ymage
Mankynd. saue and gyde vs alle and some
And leue that sompnoures gode men become
Lorpyntes I coude telle you quod the frere
Hadde I had leue for the sompnoure here
After the tyste of crist poule and John
And of oure othez doctoures many one
Suche peynes as youre hertes myght agryse
Al be it so that no tynge may I deuyse
Though that I myght a thousand wynter tel
The peynes of that cursyd house of helle
But for to kepe vs fro that cursed place
Wakith and prayeth Jesu of his grace
So kepe vs fro the temptoure Sathanas
Herkeneth this worde be ware as in this caas
The loun sytteth in his wayte alwey
To sle the innocent if that he may
Dispose ye youre hertes ay to withstonde
The feende that wol make you thral and bonde
He may nat tempte you ouir your myght
For criste wol be youre champyon and knyght
And pray the sompnoure him repent

The Sompnoures prologue

Of his mysdedys or that the deuyl him hent

Here endith the freres tale
And begynneth the Sompnoures prologe

t His sompnoure in his sterop high stode
Vpon this freze his hert was so wode
That lyke an aspen leef he quoke for ire
Lordynges quod he one thyng I desire
I you be seche of youre curtesye
Sithen ye haue herde this false freze lye
As suffreth me I may my tale tel
This frere bostith that he knowith hel
And god wote that is lytel wondre
Freres and feendes been ful lytel a sondre
For parde ye haue herde ofte tyme tel
How that a freze raupshed was to helle
In spiryte onys by a bysioun
And as an aungel led him by and down
To shewe him the tormentes that were there
In al the place ne sa we he nat a freze
Of othez folke he sa we ynough in wo
Vnto the aungel spake this freze tho
Now siz quod he haue frezes suche a grace
That none of them shal come in this place
Yes quod the aungel many a myllion
And vnto sathanas he ledde him down
And now hath sathanas suche a tayle
Brodez than a Carpye is the sayle
Holde by thy tayle thou sathanas quod he
Shewe forth thy ers and let the freze se
Where is the nest of frezes in this place
And or that a furlong were of space

The sompnoures' prologue

And right so as bees swarme oute of an hyue
Dute of the deuyllers they gan dryue
Twenty thousand frezes on a route
And throuth oute helle swarmyd alle a boute
And cam agayn as faste as they may gone
And into his ers they crepte euerichone
He clypped ageyn his tayle and lay styl
This freze whan he loked had his fyl
Dopn the tormentes of this sozry place
His spyrite god restored of his grace
Dnto his body agayn and he a woke
But natheles for fere yet he quoke
So was the deuyllers ay in his mynde
Than is it his heritage of berry kynde
God saue you al saue this cursed freze
My prologue wol I ende in this manere

Here endith the sompnoures prologue



The Sompnoures Tale

Here begynneth the Sompnoures tale

I Ordynges ther is in yorke shyre as I gesse
A meresse countre that called is holdernesse
In whiche ther went a lymptoure aboute
To preche. and eke to begge it is no doute
And so befyl that on a day this freze
Hadde prechyd in a chirche in his manere
And specially aboue euery thyng
Excited he the people in his prechyng
To trentalles and to yeue for goddes
Wherwith men myght holy houses make
There as dyuine seruice is honoured
Nat there it is wastyd and deuoured
For there it nedith nat to be yeuen
As to possessioners that may lyuen
Thankyd be god in wele and habundaunce
Trentales sayd he delpueeryn from penaunce
Theire frendes soules as wele olde as yong
Ye whan they be hastely y song
Nat for to holde a preest ioly and gay
He syngith nat but one masse on a day
Delpuereth oute anon quod he the soules
Ful harde it is with flesschoke and oules
To be y clawed or to brenne or bahe
Now spede you hastely for cristes sake
And whan this freze had sayde al his entent
With qui cum patre forth his wey he went
Whan folke in the chirche had yeue what them lest
He went his way no lenger wolde he rest
With scrippe and tpyped staf y tuched hye
In euery house he gan to poure and pryue
And begged mele and chese or elles corn

The Sompnoures Tale

His fela we had a staf y tpyppyd with horn
A peyre of tables of clene puerz
And a popntel y poliffhed fetouf
And wrote the names alwey as he stode
Of al the folke that yaued them any gode
A fhaunce that he wolde for them pray
yeue vs a buffel whete malt or rey
A goddes byrtel or a cryppe of chefe
Or elles what you lyst I may nat chefe
A goddes half peny or a masse peny
Or yeue vs of you. Traune if ye haue any
A dagon of youre blanket leue dame
Oure sustre dere lo here I wryte youre name
Bacon or beef or suche thyng as ye fynde
A sturdy harlot went them ay behynde
That was theire hors and euir he bare a sacke
And what men yaued him leyde it on his backe
And whan he was oute at the doze anon
He playned a wey the names euerichone
That he biforn hadde wrytte in his tables
He seruyd them with nyfles and with fables
May there thoulpst sompnoure quod the freze
Pease quod oure hoost for cristes modre dere
Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at alle
So thryue I quod the sompnoure so I shal
So long he went from house to house that he
Cam to an house there he was wont to be
Refresshyd more than in an hundreth places
Seke lay the gode man whos the place is
Bedred byon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic quod he o thomas gode da
Sayde this freze curtesly and soft
Thomas quod he god yelde you ful ofte

The Sompnoures Tale

I haue on this benche y fare ful wele
Here haue I etyn many a mery mele
And fro the benche he droue a wey the cat
And leyde a doun his potent and his hat
And eke his scrip and set him soft a doun
His felawe was go walken in to the toune
Forth with his knaue in to that hostery
Where as he shope him that nyght to lye
O dere mayster sayde this seke man
How haue ye faren sithen Marche began
I saue nat you this fourtnyght ne more
God wote quod he laboured haue I fu. soze
And specially for thy saluacioun
Haue I sayde many a precious orisoun
And for oure othez frendes god them blesse
I haue this day been at youre chirche at messe
And sayde a sermon to my lewde wytte
Nat after the pleyne texte of holy wrytte
For it is herde to you as I suppose
And therfore tel I you alle the glose
Glosyng is a ful glorious thyng certayn
For lettre sleeth as we clerkes sayn
There haue I taught them to be cheritable
And spende their gode there it is resonable
And there I saue oure dame where is she
yondre in the yerde I trow that she be
Sayde this man and she wol come anon
A mayster welcome be ye by seint John
Sayde this wyf. how fare ye hertely
This freze aryseth by ful curtesly
And her enbra sith in his azmes narowe
And byssith her swete and chirkyth as a sparowe
With his lippes. dame quod he right wele

The Sompnoures Tale

As he that is youre seruaunt euery dele
Thanked be god that yaued you soule and lyf
yet sawe I nat to day so fayre a wyf
In alle the chirche so god saue me
ye god amende the fautes sir quod she
Althates welcome ye be by my fey
Gra mercy dame that haue I founde alwey
But of youre grete goodnes by youre leue
I wolde pray you that ye you nat greue
I wyl with Thomas speke a lytel throuwe
These curatoures been ful neglegent and slow
To tropen tenderly a mannys conscience
In shryfte and in prechynng is my dilygence
And stude on petyrs wordes and poules
I walke and fyssh the cristen mennys soules
To yelde Jesus criste his propre rent
To sprede his wordes is alle myn entent
Now by youre leue dere sir quod she
Thy deth him wele for seint charite
He is ay angry as is a pyfmyre
Though that he haue al that he can desyre
Though I him wrye and make him warm
And ouir him ley my lett and myn arme
He troneth lyke oure boze lyth in oure sty
Wher disporte of him right none haue I
I may nat please him in no maner caas
O Thomas ie vous dy thomas thomas
This makith the feende this must be amended
He is a thyng that hight god offended
And therfore wol I speke a worde or two
Now mayster quod the wyf or that I go
What wyl ye dame I wyl go ther aboute
Now dame quod he ie vous dy sauns doute

The Sompnoures Tale

Haue I naught of a capon but the kyuez
And of youre white brede but a shyuez
And after that a rosted pyttes hede
But I ne wolde for me that no best were dede
Than hadde I with you hoolly suffisaunce
I am a man of lytel sustenaunce
My spyrite hath his offryng in the byble
My body is ay so redy and so pyncble
To wake that my body is ful destroyed
I pray you dame that ye be nat annoyed
Though I you my counseyl frendly shewe
By god I nolde haue tolde it but a fewe
And sir quod she one worde or I go
My chyld is dede within these wokes two
Sone after that ye went oute of this toun
His deth saue I by reuelacioun
Sayde this freze at home in oure dor toure
I dar wele say that within half an oure
After his deth I saue him bore to blys
In my visyoun so god my soule wys
So dyd oure Seyten and oure fermere
That haue be true frezes this fyfty yere
They may now god be thanked of his lone
Maken theire Jubile and walkyn alllone
And by I rose dnd alle oure couent eke
With many a tere trylllyng on oure cheke
Withouten noyse and claterynge of belles
Te deum was oure song and nothyng elles
Sone after to criste I had an holy oryson
Thankynge him of my gode reuelacioun
For sir and dame trustith me right wele
Oure orysouns been more effectuel
And more we se of cristes secret thynnges

Than boze people al be they kynntes
 We lyue in pouerte and in abynnyne
 And boze folke in riches and dispence
 Of mete and drynke and in soule deyrte
 We haue the wordes lust al in de spyte
 Lazar and diues lyueden ful dyuerly
 And dyuerse guerdone hadde they therby
 Who so wol pray must faste and be clene
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene
 We fare as sayth thapostel cloth and fode
 Suffiseth vs though they be nat ful gode
 The clenness and the fastyng of vs frezes
 Makith that criste exceptith oure prayers
 So morfes fourty daies and fourty nyght
 Fastyd or that god ful of his myght
 Spake with him in the mount synay
 With empty wombe fastyng many a day
 There rescyued he the laue that was wryten
 With goddes synger. and hely wele ye wetyn
 In the mount Dreb or he hadde any speche
 With high god that is oure lyues leche
 He fastyd long and was in contemplanche
 Aron he hadde the temple in gouernaunce
 And eke the othez preestes euerichone
 Into the temple whan they sholde gone
 To praye for the people and to do seruise
 They nolde drynke in no maner wyse
 No drynke that myght them dronke make
 But there in abstynence to pray and wake
 Lest that they deyde take hede what I say
 But they be sobre that for the people pray
 Where that I say for it ynough suffiseth
 oure lordes Jesu as holy wrytte deuyseth

The Sompnoures Tale

pane be en sample of fastyng and prayers
Therefore we mendicauntes we sely frezes
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence
To charyte humblenesse and abstynerce
To persecucion for euery right wysnesse
To wepyng mysericorde and to clenness
And therefore may ye se that oure prayers
I speke of be mendicaunt we frezes
Be to the high god more exceptable
Than poures with youre feestes at youre table
fro paradise first if I shal nat lye
was man oute chasyd for his glotony
And chaste was man in paradise certayne
But herken now Thomas what I shalke sayn
I haue no text of it as I suppose
But I fynde a maner thyng of a glose
That specially oure swete lorde Iesus
Spake this by frezes whan he sayde thus
Blyssed be they that poure in spryde been
And so forth alle the gospel may ye seen
Whether it be lykez to oure professioun
Or theyres that swymme in possessioun
fy on their pompe and their glotony
And of their lewdnes I them deffye
We thynke they be lyke somman
fat as a whale and walke lyke a swan
al bynolente as a bottel in the spence
Their prayer is of ful lytel reuerence
whan they for soules say the psalme of dauid
So but they sey cor meum eructauit
who folowith cristes gospel and his fore
But we that humble be chaste and poure
workers of goddes wordes and nat auditoures

The Sompnoures Tale

Therefore right as an hauke vpon his cours
By spryngith in the ayer right so prayers
Of cheritable and chaste besy frezes
Makyn them fours to goddes eris two
Thomas thomas so moot I ryde or go
And by that lorde that clepyd was seynt Iue
Ne thou our brother were sholdest thou nat thryue
For in oure chapitre praye we day and nyght
To criste to sende the bothe helth and myght
Thy body for to welden ful hastely
God wote quod he therof no thyng fele I
As helpe me god as in fewe yeres
Haue I spended on many dyuerse frezes
Ful many a ponde yet fare I neuiz the bet
Certayn my gode haue I almost besette
Fare wele my golde for it is alle agto
The freze aunswerde o thomas dost thou so
What nedith the dyuers frezes for to seche
What nedith him that hath a parfyt leche
To sechen othez leches in the toune
youre inconstaunce is youre confusioun
Holde ye than me and eke al oure couent
To pray for you be nat sufficient
Thomas that iape is nat worth a myte
youre malady is for we haue tolyte
A yene that couent foure and twenty grottes
And yene that couent half a quarter otes
And yene that freze a peny and lete him go
Nay nay Thomas it may nothyng be so
What is a ferthyng worth parted on twelue
Do eche thyng that is onyd in them selue
Is more stronge than whan it is shatred
Thomas of me thou shalt nat be flatred

The Sompnoures Tale

Thou woldest haue oure labour al for nougth
The hight god that al this worlde hath wrought
Sayth that the workman is worthy his hire
Thomas of youre tresoure naught wol I desire
As for my self but that al oure couent
To prey for you be ay so diligent
And for to holde by cristes own chirche
Thomas if ye wol lerne for to wyche
Of byldyng byon churches may ye fynde
If it be gode in Thomas lye of ynde
Ye lye here ful of angre and of ire
With whiche the deuyll set youre herte on fyre
And chyden here this holy innocent
Your wif that is here so meke and pacient
And therfore thomas trowe me if thou lyst
Ne stryue nat with thy wyf as for the best
And bere this worde a wey now by thy sayth
Touchyng suche thyng lo what the wyse sayth
Within thy house ne be thou no loun
To thy subgettes do thou noon oppressioun
Ne make thy acquaintance nat to fe
And thomas yet eft sones warne I the
Beware of her that in thy bosom slepith
Ware fro the serpent that so slely crepith
Vndre the graspe and styngith ful subtelly
Beware my sonne and herkyn paciently
That twenty thousand men haue lost their lyues
For stryuyng with their lemmannys & their wyues
Now sithen ye haue so holy a meke wyf
What nedith you thomas to make stryf
Ther nys I wys no serpent so cruelle
Whan a man treddith byon his tayle ne half so fel
As a woman is whan she hath caught any pre

The Sompnoures tale

Very vengeance is than al her desire
Ire is a synne one of the grete of seyn
And ful abhomyable to the kyng of heyn
And to him selue it is a distruction
This euery lewde bycar oz parson
Can say how ire engendreth homycide
Ire in soth the executoure is of pryde
Iroude of ire say right moche sorowe
That my tale sholde last tyl the morowe
And therfore pray I god bothe day and nyght
That to an irous man god sende lytel right
It is grete harm and certis grete pyte
To set an irous man in high degree

W Bilom ther was an irous potestate
As sayth seneke. that duryngh his astate
Vpon a day oute ryden knyghtes two
And as fortune wolde that it was so
That one of them cam home that othez nought
Anone the knyght afore the iuge is brought
That sayde thus thou hast thy felowe slayne
For whiche I deme the to deth certayne
And to a nothez knyght comaunded he
Go lede him to the deth I charge the
And happyd as they went by the wey
Towarde the place where he sholde dey
The knyght cam whiche men wende had be dede
Than thought they it were the best rede
To lede them bothe to the iuge agayn
They sayde lorde the knyght is nat slayn
His felawe here he stont hole a lyne
ye shal be dede quod he so moot I thryue
This is to sey bothe on two and thre
And to the first knyght right thus spake he

The Sompnoures Tale

I dampned the thou must algaates be dede
And thou also must nedes lese thy hede
for thou art cause why thy felawe dyeth
And to the thridde knyght right thus he seyth
Thou hast nat do that I comaunded the
And thus he dyd do them sle al thre

i Kus Cambyses was eke dronklew
 And ay delpyted him to be a shrewe
And so besyl a lorde of his menye
That louyd wele vertuous moralyte
Sayd on a day bitwyt hem self right thus
A lorde is lost if he be ougth vicious
There is many an eye and many an ere
A waytynng on a lorde he wote nat where
And dronknesse is eke a foule recorde
Of any man and namely of a lorde
for goddes loue drynkith more temperatly
Wyne makith a man to lesen wrechydly
His mynde and eke his lymmes euerichone
The reuerse shalt thou se quod he anone
And preue it by thy owne experiance
That wyne ne doth to folke suche offence
Ther is no wyne bereuyth me my myght
Of honde of fote ne of myn eyen sight
And for despyte he dranke moche the more
An hundreth part than he dyd bifoze
And right anone this prous cursed wreche
This knyghtes sonne leet bifoze him fetche
Comaunded him he sholde bifoze him stonde
And sodenly he toke his bowe in honde
And by the stryng he pulled to his ere
And with an arowe he slough the childe there
Now whither haue I a spyker honde or none

The Sompnoures tale

Quod he is al my myght and my mynde agone
Hath wyne bereuyd me myn eyen sight
What sholde I telle the aunswere of the knyght
His sone was sleyn ther is no more to say
Beware therfore with lordes for to pley
Syngeth placebo and I shalle if I can
But if it be vnto a poure man
To a poure man men sholde his byces telle
But nat to a lorde though he sholde go to hel
¶ **D**rus Cprus that ilke percieu
How destroyed he the ryuez of gysen
For that an horse of his was dreynt therin
Whan that he went babilon for to wyne
He made that the ryuez was so smal
That men myght ryde or wade ouir al
So what sayd he that so welc teche can
Ne be no felawe to no an irous man
Ne with no wode man walke by the wey
Lest thou repente I wol no ferther sey
Now thomas leef brother leue thyn ire
Thou shalt me fynde as iuste as a squire
Holde nat the deuyless knyf ay in thyn herte
Thyn angre doth the al to soze smert
But she we to me alle thy confession
May quod the seke man by seint Symon
I haue be shryue this day of my curate
I haue him tolde al hooly myn estate
It nedith nomore to speke of it sayde he
But if it lyst of myn humylite
peue me than of thy gode to make oure cloyster
Sayd he for many a mushle and many an oyster
Whan othez men haue been ful wele at ease
Haue been oure food oure cloyster for to reyse

The Sompnoures Tale

And yet god wote bnneth ourefundament
Parfourmed is ne of oure chirche ful pauement
Ther is nat a tyle within oure wonys
By god we owe fyfty pounde for stones
Now helpe thomas for him that harowed helle
Or elles must we oure bokes selle
And if men lacke oure predicacioun
Than goth the worlde al to distructioun
For who so wol fro this worlde be bereue
So god me saue thomas by youre leue
He wolde bereue oute of this worlde the sonne
For who can teche and worke as we honne
And that is nat of lytel tyme quod he
But sithen hely was or helyse
Haue frezes be that fynde I of recorde
In charite y thanked be oure lorde
Now thomas helpe for seynt charite
And down anone he sitteth on his knee
This seke man weyt nygh wode for ire
He wolde that the freze had be a fyre
With his false dissymplacioun
Suche thynges as been in my professioun
Quod he that may I yeue and none othez
ye say me thus hou that I am youre brothez
ye certis quod the frere trustith me right wele
I toke oure dame oure lettre and our sele
Now wele quod he and somwhat shal I yeue
Vnto youre holy couent while I leue
And in thy honde thou shalt it hane anone
On this condicion and othez none
That thou departe it so my dere brothez
That euery freze haue a smoch as othez
This shalt thou swere on thy professioun

The Sompnoures tale

Withoute fraude or cauillacioun
I swere it quod the freze vpon my feyth
And therewith al his honde in his he leyth
So here my feyth in me shal be no lache
Than put thy hond adoun right by my backe
Sayde this man and grope wele behynde
Byneth my buttoke there shalt thou fynde
A thyng that I haue hydde in pryuyte
A thought this freze that shal go with me
And doun his honde he launcheth to the clyft
In hope for to fynde there som gode yest
And whan this seke man felt this freze
Aboute his towel troppng here and there
Amyd his honde he let the freze a farte
Ther is no capul drawyng in a carte
That myght haue let a farte of suche a soun
The freze by stert as doth a wode byoun
A fals chorle quod he for coches bones
This hast thou in despyte do for the nonys
Thou shalt abyte this fart if that I may
His meny with that herde suche aray
Come lepyng in and chased oute the freze
And forth he goth with a ful heuy chere
And fet his felawe there as lay his stoz
He looked as he were a wyldi boze
And grynteth with the tethe so was he wrotte
A sturdy paas doun to the courte he goth
Where as there woned a man of grette honoure
To whome that he was alwey confessoure
This worthy man was lorde of that byllatte
This freze cam as he were in a ratte
Where as this lorde sat etyng at the borde
Vnnyth myght the freze speke one worde

Tyl at the last he sayde god you se
 This lorde gan loke and sayd benedicite
 What freze John what maner worlde is this
 I se wele some thyng ther is a mys
 ye loke as though the wode were ful of theuys
 Syt down and tel me what youre greue is
 And it shal be amended if that I may
 I haue quod he had a despyte to day
 God yelde it you a down in youre byllatte
 That in this worlde ther nys so poure apatte
 That he nolde haue abhomyngnacioun
 Of that I haue resceyued in the touyn
 And yet ne greuyth me nothyng so soze
 As that the olde chorle with lockis hore
 Blasphemyd hath oure holy couent eke
 Now mayster quod the lorde I you beseke
 No mayster sir quod he but seruytoure
 Though I haue had in scole that honoure
 God lyketh nat that raby men vs calle
 Nothet in market ne in othet lartge halle
 No force quod he but tel me al youre greef
 Sir quod this freze an odious myschief
 This day betydde is to myn ordre and me
 And so per consequens in eche degre
 Of holy chirche god amend it sone
 Sir quod the lorde we wote what is to done
 Distempere you nat ye be my confessor
 ye be the salt of the erthe and the sauoure
 For goddes loue your pacience now holde
 Tel me youre greef. and he anone him tolde
 As ye haue herde biforn ye wote wele what
 The lady of the house ay stylle sat
 Tyl she had herde what the freze had sayde

The Sompnoures tale

By goddes modre quod she this blissid mayde
Is ther ought elles tel me feythfully
Madame quod he hou thynke ye therby
How that me thynketh quod she so god me spede
I say a chorle hath do a chorles dede
What sholde I say god let him neuiz the
His seke hede is fulle of banpte
I holde him in a maner of a fransye
Madame quod he by god I shal nat lye
But I in any wyse may on him a wreke
I shal diffame him ouir alle where I speke
That fals blasphemoure whiche that charged me
To parte it that wol nat departed be
To euery y lyke moche with myschaunce
The lorde sat styll as he were in a traunce
And in his herte he rollyd bp and down
How that this chorle hath ymagynacioun
To shewe suche a probleme to the freze
Neuiz erst or now herde I of suche a matere
I trowe the deuyll put it in his mynde
In arsmetryke shal ther no man fynde
Bifore this day of suche a questioun
Who sholde make a demonstracioun
That euery man shorde haue lyke his parte
As of a soun or of sauoure of a farte
O nyce proude chorle I shrewe his face
Po sires quod the lorde with harde grace
Who euiz herde of suche a thyng or now
To euery man y lyke tel me how
This is an impossible it may nat be
By nyce chorle godlet him neuiz the
The romblyng of a farte and euery scyn
Nys but of the ayez reuerberacioun

The Sompnoures tale

And euir it wastyth lyte and lyte a wey
Ther is noman can deme by my fey
If that it were departed equally
What lo my chorle lo yet how shrewdly
Vnto my confessoure to day he spake
I holde him certayn a demonyache
Now ete youre mete and let the chorle go pley
Let him go hang him self a deuyll wey
Now stode the lordes squyer at his borde
That carued his mete and herde worde by worde
Of alle this thyng of whiche I haue you sayde
My lord quod he be ye nat euyl appayed
For I coude telle for a gowne clothe
To you sir freze so ye be nat brothe
How that this fart sholde eyn delyd be
Among your couent if it lyke sy thee
Tel quod the lord and thou shalt haue anone
A gowne clothe by god and by seint John
My lord quod he whan that the wedyr is fayre
Withoute wynde oz perturbyng of ayez
Let bryng a carte whele right into this halle
But so that it haue the spokes al
Twelf spokes hath a carte whele comonly
And bryng me than twelue frezes woot ye why
For thertene is a couent as I gesse
Your confessoure here for his worthynesse
Shal parfouze me by the nombre of his couent
Than shal they knele down by one assent
And to euery spokes ende in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shal a freze
Your noble confessour ther god him saue
Shal holde his nose vpright vndre the naue
Than shal this chorle with bely styf and tough

The Sompnoures tale

As any taboure hydez be y brought
And set him on the whele right of this carte
Vpon the naue and make him let a farte
And ye shal se vpon peryl of my lyf
By preef whiche that is demonstratyf
That equally the sounde if it wol wende
And eke the st ynke oute of the spokes ende
Saue that this worthy man your confessoure
Vicause he is a man of grete honoure
Shal haue the first fruyte as reason is
The noble vsage of frezes yet is this
The worthpest man of them shal first be seruyd
And certaynly he hath it wele deseruyd
He hath to day taught vs so moche gode
With prechyng in the pulpet there he stode
That I may bouche sauf I say for me
He hadde the first smelle of fartes thre
And so wolde al his brethern hardely
He berith him so fayre and so holyly
The lord the lady and eche man saue the freze
Sayd that Jankyn spake in this matere
As wele as Duyd or protholome
Touchyng the chorles they sayd subtelte
And hith wyt made him speke as he spake
He nys no fool ne no demonyake
And Jankyn hath y wonne a ne we gown
My tale is doon we be almost at the tonn

Here endith the Sompnoures tale
And here foloweth the prologue of the
Clerke of Wyenforde

The Clerkes prologue of Dvenforde

fyr clerke of Dvenforde oure hoost sayde
ye ryde as quoy and styl as doth a mayde
were new spoused sy ttryng at the borde
This day ne herde I of youre tong a worde
I trow ye studeye aboute som sophyme
Bnt Salamon sayde that al thyng hath tyme
for goddis sake as be of gode chere
It is no tyme now to studeye here
Tel vs some mery tale by youre fep
for what man is entred in to a pley
He nedes mozt in to the pley assent
But prechith nit as frezes do in sent
To make vs forure olde spures wepe
Ne that thy tale make vs nat to slepe
Tel vs som mery thyng of auentures
your termes your coloures and your figures
Wepe them in store til so be that ye endyte
Ryght style as when ren to hpyng Wryte
Spekith so playn a this tyme I you pray
That we may vnde stande what ye say
This worthy clerke benyngnely answerd
Ost quod he I am your verde
ye haue as now of vs the gouernaunce
And therfore I shal to you obey saunce
As fer as reason a slith hardely
I wol you tel a tale whiche that I
Peruyd at padowe of a worthy clerke
As preynd is by his wordes and his werke
He is now dede and nayled in the cheste
I pray to god geue his soule gode rest
Fraunceys pitrarke the laureat poete
Ryght this clerke whose rethorike swete
Enlumyned al ytaile of poetrye

The Clerkes prologe of Wyenforde

As lynnan dyd of philosophye
Or la we or othez arte particulere
But deth that wol nat suffre vs duelle here
But as it were the tWyndley n of an eye
Them bothe hath slayne al shal we dye
But forth to tel of this worthy man
That taught me this tale as I began
I say that first with high style he enditeth
Or he the body of his tale writeth
A prohempe in whiche discripeth he
Pemounte and of saluces the countre
And spekieth of apertyn the hilles hie
That been the boundes of West lumbardye
And of mount beselus in specialle
Where that the po oute of the Wel smalle
Takynge his first spryngyng and his furs
That est ward euiz encre sith in his cours
To comely warde to fere and benyse
The whiche a long thyng were to deuyse
And truly as to my iutement
He thynkith it a long apertynent
Saue that him lyst conueye his matere
But this is his tale as ye may here

Here endith the prologue of the
Clerke of Wyenforde
And here begynneth his tale

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde



t Here is in the West syde of Itayle
Down at the rute of besulus the colde
A lusty playn habundannt of bytaye
Where many a toune and toure thou mayst behold
That founded were in tyme of faders olde
And many a nother delptable sight
And saluces this noble countre hight
A Markes somtyme lord was of that londe
As were his worthy eldres him bifore
And obeysaunt ay redy to his honde
Were alle his lieges bothe lasse and more
Thus in delpte he lyued and hath doo pore
Beloued and dradde througth fauoure of fortune
Bothe of his lordes and eke of his comune
Therwith he was to speke of lynage
The gentyllest y born of lumbarde
A fayre parson a strong and yong of age
And ful of honoure and of curtesye

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Discrete ynough his countre for to gy
Saue in som thynges that he was to blame
And Walter was this yong lordes name

I blame him thus that he considred nat
In tyme comyng what myght him betyde
But on his lust present was al his thought
As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde
Wele nygh alle othez cures lete he slyde
And eke he nolde and that was worst of al
Wedde no wyf for oughit that myght befall

Only that poynte his people bare so soze
That flocke mele on a day they to him went
And one of them that wysest was of loze
Drerles that the lorde wolde best assent
That he sholde tel him what his people ment
Drerles coude he shewe wele suche matere
He to the marques sayd as ye shal here

O noble marques your humanyte
Assureth vs and yeueth vs hardpasse
As ofte as tyme is of necessite
That we to you may telle oure heynesse
Acceptith now lord of your gentylnes
That we with pytous hert vnto you pleyne
And let you erys nat my voyce disdeyne

Al haue I nat to done in this matere
More than a nothez man hath in this place
yet for a smoch as ye my lord so dere
Haue alwey shewed me fauour and grace
I dar the bettre aske of you a space
Of audience to shewe oure request
And ye my lord to do right as you lest

For certis lord so wele vs lypheth you
And al youre werke and euir haue doon that we

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Ne coude nat oure self deuise hou
We myght lye in more felicite
Saue one thyng lord if youre wyl be
That for to be a weddyd man you lest
Than were youre people in souerayne hertes rest
So we ye youre hede vnder the blissful yoke
Of soueraynte and nat of seruyse
Whiche that men clepith spousayle or wedloke
And thynkith lord among youre wyttes wyse
How that oure daies passe in sondry wyse
For though we slepe or wake ryne or ryde
Ay styeth the tyme it wol noman abyde
And though youre grene yowthe floure as yet
In crepith age as styke as any stone
And deth man asshet every age and smyte
In eche estate for there eschapith none
And also certayn as we knowe echone
That we shal dye and vncertayn we alle
Been of the day whan deth shal on vs falle
Acceptith than of vs the true entent
That yet neuir refuseden youre heste
And we wol lord if ye wol assent
These you a wyf in short tyme at the lest
Born of the gentyllest and of the mest
Of al ytalie so that it ougth seme
Honoure to god and you as I can deme
Delyuer vs oute of alle this besy drede
And take a wyf for high goddes sake
For if so be it be falle as god forbede
That througth youre deth youre lyne sholde slake
And that a straunte successoure sholde take
Your heritage o wo were vs on lyue
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Her meke prayez and her pytous chere
Made the marques herte for to haue pyte
ye wol quod he myn owne people dere
To that I neuir erst thought constreyne me
I me reiofed of my lyberte
That selden tyme is founde in mariatte
There I was fre I must be in seruatte
But nathelesse I se youre true entent
And truste vpon youre wytte and haue done ay
Wherfore of my fre wyf I wol assent
To wedde me as sone as euir I may
But theze as ye haue profezed me to day
To chese me a wyf I you relece
That chose I pray you of that profez sece
For god it wote that children oft been
Vnlyke theire worthy elders them bifore
Bounte cometh al of god nat of the streen
Of whiche they be gendred and y bore
I truste in goddes bounte and therfore
My mariatte and myn astate and rest
I him betake he may do as him lyst
Lete me allone in chesynge of my wyf
That charge vpon my bake I wyl endure
But I you pray and charge vpon your lyf
That what wyf I take ye may assure
To worshippinge her whiles her lyf may dure
In worde in werke both here and euery where
As sie an emperours doughter were
And ferthermore this shal ye swere that ye
Arenst my chose shal neuir grutche ne stryue
For sithen I shal forgo my lyberte
At youre request aseuir moot I thryue
There as my herte is sette there wol I wyue

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And but ye wol assent in suche manere
I pray you spekeith nomore of this matere
With herty wyl they sweryn and assentyng
To alle this thyng there sayd nat one wight nay
Besechyng him of grace or that that they wentyn
That he wolde graunte them a certayn day
Of his spousaile as sone as euir he may
Foz yet alwey many of the people dredde
Lest the marques wolde no wyf wedde

He graunted them a day suche as them lest
On whiche he wolde be weddyd sikerly
And sayde he dyd al this at their request
And they with humble entent buyomly
Knelynge vpon their knees ful reuerently
Him thanked alle and thus they haue an ende
Of their entent and home agayn they wende

And herupon he toke his officers
And comaunded for the fest for to puruey
And to his pryuy knyghtes and squyers
Suche charge paue as he lyst on them ley
And they to his comaundment obeye
And eche of them doth al his diligence
To do vnto that fest high reuerence

Prima pars Grisilidis

n At fez fro that paleys honourable
There as this marques shope his mariatge
There stode a thorpe of sight ful delytable
In whiche that poure folke of that byllatge
Hadde their bestes and their herbyttage
And of their labour toke their sustenaunce
After that the erthe paue them habundaunce

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Among these poure folke ther duelled a man
Whiche was y holde pourest of them alle
But high god somtyme sende can
His grace into a pytel oyes stalle
Janycola men of that throwpe him cal
A doughter hadde he fayre ynough to sight
And Brisilides this yong mayden hight
But for to speke of vertuouse beaute
Than was she one the fayrest vndre sonne
And ful pouerly y fostryd by was she
No lycorous lust was through her herte y ronne
But oftez of the welle than of the wyne tonne
She dranke and she wolde bertue please
She knewe wele labour but none ydle ease
But though this mayde so tendre were of age
yet in the brest of her virginyte
There was enclosed rype and sadde corage
And in grete reuerence of charite
Her old poure fadre fostryd she
A fewe shepe spynnyng on feide she kepte
She wolde nat be ydle tyl she slepte
And whan she homwarde cam she wolde bryng
Wortys or othez herbes tymes ofte
The whiche she shredde and sethith for her lyuyng
And made her bedde harde and nothyng soft
And ay she kept her faders lyf on lof
With euerichone obeyfaunce and diligence
That childe myght do to the faders reuerence
Upon Brisilde this poure creature
ful oft sithys this marques set his eye
As he rode on huntynng parauenture
And whan it besyl that he myght her a spye
He nat with wanton lokyng of folp

His eyen cast on her but in sad' Wyse
Upon her cheeke he wolde him oft auyse
Commendynge in his hert her womanhode
And eke her bertue passynge any wight
Of so yong atte as wele in chere as dede
For though the people had no grete insight
In bertue he considred ful right
Her bounte and disposed him that he wolde
Wedde her only if he euir wedde sholde

The day of weddyng cam but no wight can
Tel what maner woman it sholde be
For whiche meruayle wondrous many a man
And sayd they were in pryuyte
Wol nat oure lord leue yet his bannte
Wol he nat wedde alas alas the while
Why wol he thus him selue and vs begyle

But natheles this marques had do make
Of gemmys set in golde and in a sure
Broches and rynge for Crisilides sake
And of her clothyng toke the mesure
Of a mayde lyke vnto her stature
And eke of her othez orna mentes alle
That vnto suche a weddyng sholde be falle

The tyme of vndryng on the same day
Approchyd that the weddyng sholde be
And al the paleys put was in aray
Bothe halles and chambre eche in his dettre
Houses of office stuffed with grete plente
There mayst thou se of deyn teous bytayne
That may be founde as fer as lastith y tale

This ryalle marques richely arrayed
Lordes and ladies in his company

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

The whiche that to the fest were prayed
And of his retenu the bachelery
With many a sowne of sondry melody
Vnto the byllage of whiche I tolde
In this ar ray the right wey haue holde

 Brisilde of this god wote ful innocent
That for her shapen was al this ar ray
To fet water at a wellle is went
And cometh home as sone as euir she may
For wele she herde sayd that ilke day
That the marques sholde wedde and if she myght
She wolde fayne haue seyn som of that sight

 She thought I wol with othez maydeyns stond
That been my felawes in oure doze and se
The marques and therfore wyl I fonde
To doon at home as sone as it may be
The labour whiche that longith to me
And than I may at leysen here beholde
If she this wey vnto the castel holde

 And as she wolde ouir the threshholde gone
The marques cam and gan her for to calle
And she sat down her water pot anone
Beside the thre sholde in an oves stalle
And down vpon her knees she gan to fal
And with sadde countenaunce kneled styl
Tyl she had herde her soueraynes lordes wyl

 This thoughtful markes spake vnto the mayde
ful sobirly and sayd in this manere
Where is youre fadre o Brisilides he sayde
And she with reuerence and humble chere
Aunswerde lorde he is al redy here
And in she goth withouten lenger let
And to the marques she her fadre fet

He by the honde than toke this olde man
 And sayd thus whan he hadde him a syde
 Janpcula I nether may ne can
 The plesaunce lenger of my herte hyde
 If that thou vouchesauf that so betyde
 Thy doughter wol I take or that I wende
 As to my wyf vnto her lyues ende

Thou louest me I wote it wele certayn
 And art my feythful liege man boze
 And al that lyheth me I dar wele sayn
 It lyheth the and specially therfore
 Tel me that poynte that I sayde bifoze
 And if thou wylt vnto that purpos draue
 To take me for thy sonne in laue

This sodeyn caas this man astoned so
 That rede he weyt abasshyd and al quakynge
 He stode. vnnethe sayd he wordes mo
 But only thus lord quod he my wyllynge
 Is as your wyl ne agaynst your lykynge
 I wol no thyng ye be my lorde soder
 Right as you lyst gouerneth this matere
 yet wol I quod this markes softly

That in your chambre I and you and she
 Haue a collacion and wotest thou why
 For I wol aske if it her wyl be
 To be my wyf and reule her after me
 And al this shal be do in thy presence
 I nyl nat speke oute of thyn audience

And in the chambre while they were aboute
 Her tretees whiche as ye shal after here
 The people cam into the house al withoute
 And wondred them in hou honest manere
 And so tentesly kept her fader dere

But vtterly grisilde wondre myght
 For neuiz erst ne sa we she suche a sight

No wondre is though she were stoned
 To se so grete a gest come in that place
 She neuiz was to no suche gastes y woned
 For whiche she loked with ful pale face
 But shortly forth this matere for to chace
 These been the wordes that the markes sayd
 To this berzy benyngne feythful mayde

Grisilde he sayde ye shal wele vnderstand
 It lyketh vnto youre fadre and vnto me
 That I you wedde and eke it may so stonde
 As I suppose ye wyl that it so be
 But thies demaundes aske I ferst quod he
 That sithen it shalbe done in hasty wyse
 Wol ye assent oz elles you auyse

I say thus be ye redy with gode herte
 To al my lust and that I frely may
 As me best thynkith though ye laugh oz smert
 And neuiz ye to gruche nyght ne day
 Whan I say ye that ye say nat onys nay
 Nothet by worde ne by frounyng countenaunce
 Swere this and here I swere oure alliaunce

Wondryng vpon these wordes quakyng for drede
 She sayd lord indigne and vnworthy
 I am to suche honoure as ye me bede
 But as ye wol your self right so wol I
 And here I swere that neuiz wyllyngly
 In werke ne thought I wol you disobeye
 For to be dede though me were loth to dye

This is ynouth grisilde myn quod he
 And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere
 Dute at the doze and after cam she

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

And to the people he sayde in this manere
This is my wyf quod he that stondith here
Honoureth her and loueth her I you pray
Who so me loueth ther is no more to say

And for that nothyng of her olde tere
She sholde bryng into his house he hadde
That women sholde dispoyle her there
Of whiche these ladies were nat ful gladde
To handel her clothes where in she was cladde
But natheles this mayde bright of heu
fro foote to hede they clothed her alle new

Her heris they kempte that lay vntressyd
fynl rudely and with theire fynngers smale
A crowne on her hede they haue y dressyd
And set her ful of ouches grete and smale
Of her aray what shulde I make a tale
Vnneth the people her knewe for her fayrnesse
Whan she translatyd was in suche riches

This markes hath her spoused with a ryng
Brought for the same cause and than her set
Vpon an horse snowe white ful wele amblyng
And to his paleys or he lenger let
With ioyfulle people that her ledde and mette
Conueyed her and thus the day they spende
In reuel tyl the sonne gan disceude

And shortly forth this tale for to chace
I say that to this newe markeesse
God hath suche fauoure sent of his grace
That it ne sempd by no lphelenes
That she was boyn and fed in rudenesse
As in a cote or in an oyes stalle
But norissed in an emperours halle
To euery wight she woyen is sodere

The Clerkes tale of Dpenforde

And worshopful that folke there she was boze
And from her birthe knewe her yere by yere
Wherewith trowed they but durst haue swore
That to Janicula of whiche I spake bifoze
She doughter was for as by coniecture
Them thought she was a nother creature
For though that euir vertuous was she
She was encrested in suche excellence
Of thewes gode set in high bounte
And so discrete and faire of eloquence
So benygne and so digne of reuerence
And coude so the peoples hertes embrace
That eche her loued that loked in her face
Nat only of saluces in the toun
Publissed was the bounte of her name
But eke besyde in many a reggioun
If one sayde wele another sayde the same
So spredde of her bounte the fame
That men and women bothe yong and olde
Goon to saluces vpon her to beholde
This Walter lowly nay but ryally
Wedded hath with fortunat honeste
In goddes peas lyueth ful honestly
At home and out ward grace ynough hadde he
And for he sa we that vndre lowe dettre
Was honest vertue hyd the people him helde
A prudent man and that is seen ful selde
Nat only grisilde though her wyf
Coude al the feet of wyfly humblesnes
But eke whan that the caas requyred it
The comune proufet coude she redresse
There nas discorde rancor ne heynnes
In al the londe that she coude it apeas

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And wysely Bryng them in rest and eas
Though her husbonde were absent or none
If gentylmen or other of that countre
were wroth she wolde Bryng them at one
So wyse and rype wordes had she
And in iutgement so grette equyte
That she from heuy sent was as men wende
People to saue and euery wrong to amende

Nat long tyme after that this grisilde
was weded she a doughter had y bore
Al had her kyuer bore a knaue childe
Blade was the marques and the folke therfore
For though a mayde childe cam al bifore
She may bnto a knaue childe atteyne
By lykelyhode sithen she nys nat barreyne

Explicit pars secunda
Et sequitur pars tercia

t Her fyl as it fallith ofte tyme mo
Whan that this childe had soked but a throwe
This markes in his herte longith so
To tempte his wif her sadnes to knowe
That he ne myght oute of his hert throwe
This meruaylous desize his wif to assay
Nedeles god wote he thought her to affrey
He hadde assayed her ynough of tyme bifore
And fonde her euir good what nedith it
Her for to tempte and alwey more and more
Though som man pryse it for a subtel wyt
But as for me I say ful euyl it syt
To assay a wyf whan it is no nede
And put her in aunguysshe and in drede

For whiche this markes wrought in this maner
 He cam allone a nyght there as she lay
 With sterne face and right bly chere
 And sayde thus grisilde quod he that day
 That I you toke fro poure arzaie
 And put you in estate of high noblese
 ye haue nat that forgotten as I gesse

I say grisilde the present dignyte
 In whiche I haue put you as I trowe
 Makith you nat forgetful for to be
 That I you toke in poure estate ful lowe
 For any wele ye must your selue knowe
 Take hede of euery worde what I say
 There is no wight that herith but we twey

ye wote your self hou that ye cam here
 In to this house it is nat long a go
 And though to me ye be both leef and dere
 Vnto my gentylles be no thyng so
 They say to them it is grete shame and wo
 For to be subgette and be in seruage
 To the that born art in so smalle a billage

And namely sithen thy doughter was y bore
 These wordes haue they spoken doutles
 But I desire as I haue doon bifore
 To lyue my lyf with them in rest and peas
 I may nat in this caas be recheles
 I must do with thy doughter for the best
 Nat as I wolde but as my people lyst

And yet god wote this is ful lothe to me
 But natheles withoute your wyttynng
 I wol nat do but this I wol quod he
 That ye to me assente as to this thyng
 Shewe now poure pacience in your workynng

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

That ye me hight and swore in yone byllage
That day that made was oure mariatge
Whan she hadde herde al this she nat ameuyd
Nether in worde in chere ne in countenaunce
For as it semed she was nat attgreuyd
She sayth lorde al lyth in your plefaunce
My childe and I with hartely obeyfaunce
Been your owne and ye may saue and spylle
Your owne thyng do ye after your wyl

Ther may be nothyng so god my soule saue
Lychyng to you that may displease me
Ne I desire no thyng in any wise to haue
Ne drede for to lese saue only ye
This wyl is in myn herte and ay shalbe
Nolength of tyme or deth may this deface
Ne turne my corage to none othez place

Blade was this marques of her aunsweryng
But yet it sempd as it were nat so
Al drezy was his chere and his lokyng
Whan that he sholde oute of the chambre go
Sone after this a furlong wey or two
He pryuelly hath tolde al his entent
Vnto a man and to his wyf him sent

A maner of a seriaunt was this prey man
The whiche that feythfulle he founde had
In thynges grete and eke suche folke wel can
Done excusacioun in thynges badde
The lorde knewe wele that he him loued and drad
And whan this seriaunt knewe his lordes wyl
In to the chambre stalked him ful styl

Madame he sayde ye must forgyue it me
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned
Ye be ful wyse and ful wele knowe ye

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

That lordes heests may nat be feyned
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned
But men must nede vnto theire lust obeye
And so wol I ther is no more to sey

This childe I am comaunded for to take
And spake nomore but oute the childe he hent
Dispitously and gan a chere to make
As though he wolde haue slayn it or he went
Grisilde must alle suffre and concent
And as a lambe she sytteth meke and stille
And lete this crnel seriaunt do his wyl

Suspicious was the fame of this man
Suspecte his face suspecte his worde also
Suspecte the tyme in whiche he this began
Alas her doughter that she loued so
She wende he wolde haue slayn it tho
But neuirtheles she nether wept ne sighed
Confermyd her to that the marques lyked

But at the last speke than she began
And mekely she to the seriaunt prayde
So as he was a berry gentylman
That she myght her childe kysse onys or he dyed
And in her barme she the lytel childe leyde
With ful sadde face and gan the childe to blysse
And lulled it and after gan it kysse

And thus she sayde in her benyghtne boyce
Fare wele my childe I shal the neuir se
But sithen I haue the markyd with the croyce
Of thy lke fadre blissed moot thou be
That for vs dyed vpon the croce of tre
Thy soule lytel childe I him betake
For this nyght shalt thou dye for my sake
I trow that to a noyce in this caas

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

It had be herde this routhe for to se
Wele myght a modre than haue cryed alas
But natheles so sadde and stedefast was she
That she endured al aduersite
And to the seriaunt mekely she sayde
Haue here attayn poure lytel yong mayde

Both now quod she and do my lordes heest
But one thyng wyl I pray you of poure grace
But if my lorde forbade you at the leest
Burieth this lytel body in som place
That beestes ne foules it to rase
But he to that purpos no worde wolde say
But toke the childe and went spon his wey

This seriaunt cam to the lorde attayn
And of Brisilides wordes and hez there
He tolde him poynte by poynte short and playn
And him presented with his doughter dere
Sumwhat this lorde had rewtte in his manere
But natheles his purpos held he styll
As lordes doon whan they wol haue their wyl

And bad his seriaunt that he pryuyly
Shulde the childe soft wynde and wrappe
With alle the circumstaunces tenderly
And cary it in a coffre oz in a lappe
But on peyne his hede of for to swappe
That noman sholde know of this entent
Ne whens he cam ne whether that he went

But at Boleyn he to his sustre dere
That ilke tyme of paup was countesse
He sholde it take and she we hez this matere
Bisecchyng hez to do her besynesse
This childe to fostre in alle gentylnesse
And whose childe that it is he bad her hyde

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

From euery wight for ought that may betyde

The seriaunt goth and hath fulfilled this thing

But to this markes now retourne we

For now goth he ful fast ymagynnyng

If by his wyues chere he myght se

Or by her worde perceyue that she

Were chaunged but neuiz coude he fynde

But euiz in one lyke sadde and kynde

As gladd as humble as besy in seruice

And eke in loue as she was wont to be

Was she to him and in euery maner wyse

Ne of her doughter nat one worde spake she

Non accident for none aduersite

Was seyn in her ne neuiz her doughter name

Ne named she in ernest ne in game

Explicit tercia pars

Et incipit pars quarta

i In this estate ther past by foure yere

Or she with childe was but as god wolde

A man chylde she bare by this waltere

Ful gracious and fayre for to beholde

And whan that folke it to his fadre tolde

Nat only he but alle his countre mery

Was for this chylde and god they thanke and hery

Whan it was two yere olde and fro the brest

Departyd fro his noyce vpon a day

This marques caught yet a nother lyst

To tempte his wyf yet ofter if he may

Vnnedeles was she temptyd in assay

But weddyd men ne can no mesure

Whan that they fynde a pacient creature

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Wyf quod this marques ye haue herde or this
My people berith heuy siberly oure mariage
And namely sithen my sonne y born is
Now it is worse than euir in al oure age
The murmure sleth my hert and my corage
For to myn erys cometh the voyce so smert
That it ful nyght distroyed hath myn herte

Now say they thus Whan Walter is agone
Than shal the blode of Janycula succede
And be oure lorde for othez haue we none
Suche wordes sayth my people oute of drede
Wele ought I of suche murmure take hede
For certaynly I drede al suche sentence
Though they nat prey in myn audirnce

I wolde lyue in pease if that I myght
Wherfore I am disposed ful vtterly
As I his sustre sezuyd by nyght
Right so I thynke to serue him pryuelly
This warne I you that ye nat sodenly
Dute of your self for no wo sholde outray
Be patient and therof I you pray

I haue quod she sayd thus and euir shal
I wol nothyng in no maner certayn
But as you lyst nothyng greuyth me at al
Though that my doughter and my sonne be slayn
At your comaundment this is for to sayn
I haue hadde no parte of children t weyn
But first seeknes and after wo and peyn

ye been oure lorde doth with your owne thyng
Right as you lyst a skith no rede of me
For as I left at home al my clothyng
Whan I cam first to you right so quod she
Left I my wyl and alle my liberte

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

And toke youre clothyng wherfore I you pray
Doth youre plesaunce I wol youre lust obey
And certis if I hadde any prescience
Your wyl to knowe or ye youre lust me tolde
I wolde it do withouten negligence
But now I wote your lust and what ye wolde
Al your plesaunce ferm and stable I holde
For wylt I that my deth myght do you ease
Right gladly wolde I dye you to please

Deth may nat make no comparison
Unto your loue. and whan this markes say
The constaunce of his wyf he cast a doun
His eyen two and wondred that she may
In pacience suffre al this maner aray
And forth he goth with drezy countenance
But to his herte it was ful grete plesaunce

This byle seriaunt in the same wyse
That her doughter caught right so he
Or worse if men can worse deuise
Hath hent her sonne that ful is of beaute
And euiz in one so pacient was she
That she no chere made of heuynes
But lyst her sonne and after gan him bles
Saue she prayed him if that he myght
Her lytel sonne he wolde in the erthe graue
His tendre lymmes delycate in sighte
Fro foules and fro bestes it to saue
But she none othez aunswere of him myght haue
He went his wey as he nothyng ne roughe
But to boloyne he it tenderly brought

This marques wondred euiz lengre the more
Upon her pacience and if that he
Ne hadde knowe sothly ther bifore

That parfytely her children loued she
He wolde haue wende that of som subtelte
And of malice and for cruelle corage
That she had sustryd this with sadde corage

But wele he knewe that next him self certayn
She loued her childe best in any wyse
But now of women wolde I aske ful fayne
If these assayes myght nat suffise
What coude a sturdy husbonde more deuyse
To preue her wyfhode or her stedefastnesse
And he contynuyng euir in sturdynesse

But ther be folke of suche condicion
That whan they haue a certayn purpos take
That can nat stynt of theire entencion
They wyl nat of theire first purpos slake
But right as they were bounde at a stake
Right so this marques hath fully purposed
To tempte his wif as he was first disposed

He wayted if by worde or countenaunce
That she to him was chaunged of corage
But neuir coude he fynde any variaunce
She was ay in one herte and in visage
And ay the ferther that she was in age
The more trewe if it were possible

She was to him in loue and more penyble

For whiche it semyd thus that of them two
There was but one wyl for but as walter lest
The same lust was her plesaunce also
And god bethanked al fyl for the best

She shewyd wele for none worldly brest
A wif as of her selue no thyng ne sholde
Wyl in effecte but as her husbonde wolde

The sclaudre of walter wondre wyde spradde

The Clerkes tale of Openforde

That of cruel herte he ful wychedly
For he a poure woman weddyd hadde
Hath murdered bothe his children pryuelly
Suche murmure was among them comonly
No wondre is for to the peoples ere
Ther cam no worde but that they murdered were
For whiche there as the people there bifoze
Had loued him wele the sclandre of his defame
Made them that him they hated therfore
To be a murder is an hateful name
But natheles for earnest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos wolde nat stynt
To tempte his wif was alle his entent
Whan that his doughter twelue yere was of age
He into the courte of Rome in subtel wyse
Enfourmed of his wyl sent his messatte
Comaundyng them suche bulles to deuyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffise
How that the pope had as for his peoples rest
That he shulde wedde another wif if he lyst
I say he had they shulde countrefete
The popes bulles makyng mencion
That he hath leue his first wif for to lete
As by the popes owne dispensacion
To stynt the rancor and the discencion
Betwene his people and him thus sayd the bulle
The whiche they haue publisshed at the fulle
The rude people as no wondre ne is
Wende ful wele that it had be right so
But whan these tydynges cam to trisilidis
I deme that the herte of her was ful wo
But she y lke sad was euirmoo
Disposed was this humble creature

The aduersite of fortune al to endure
 Abydyngt euir his lust and his plefaunce
 To whom that she was yeuen herte and al
 As to his berry worldly suffisaunce
 But shortly if I this story tel shal
 This marques writen hath in especial
 A lettre in whiche he she with his entent
 And secretly to Boleyne hath it sent
 To the erle of paup whiche had tho
 Weddyd his sustre prayed him specially
 To Bryngt home ayen his children two
 In honourable state al openly
 But one thyng he him prayed vtterly
 That he no wight though they dyd enquire
 Sholde nat tel whoos children that they were
 But say the mayde shal wedded be
 Vnto the marques of saluces anone
 And as this erle was prayed so dyd he
 For at the day set he on his wey is gone
 Towarde Saluces and lordes many one
 In riche aray this mayde for to gyde
 Her yong brother rydyng by his syde
 Arrayed ful freshe in her manere
 This freshe mayde ful of gemmys clere
 Her brother whiche seyn yere was of age
 Arrayed ful freshe in his manere
 And thus in gret noblesse and glade chere
 Towarde saluces spedyngt their iournay
 Fro day to day they ryden in their wey

Explicit pars Quarta
 Et incipit pars Quinta

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

a Wont al this after the Wicked vsage
 This marques is yet aboute to tempte more
The vtterest preef of her corage
Fully to haue experience and lore
If she were as stedefast as bifoze
He on a day in open audience
Ful boistously hath sayd here this sentence
 Certis grisilde I hadde ynough of ple sauncee
To haue you to my wyf for youre godenesse
As for your trouthe and youre obey saunee
Nat for youre lygnage ne for youre richesse
But now knowe I in werzy sothfastnes
That in grete losshippe if I wyl auyse
There is grete seruitnde in sondre wyse
 I may nat do as euery plowman may
My people constreyne th me for to take
A nother wyf and cry day by day
And eke the pope rancor for to flake
Concentith it that dar I bndretake
And truly this moche I wol you say
My newe wyf is comyng by the way
 Be strong of herte and boyde anone her place
And that dowez that ye brought bnto me
Takith it ayen I yeue you leue of my grace
Retourneth to your faders house quod he
No man may haue alwey prosperite
With euyh herte I rede you to endure
The stroke of fortune oz of auenture
 And she atgyn aunswered in patience
My lorde quod she I wote and wyste alwey
How that betwene youre magnificence
And my pouerte. no wight can ne may
Make any comparison. it is no nay

I ne helde me neuir digne in no manere
 To be youre wyf ne be youre chamberer
 And in this house there ye me lady made
 The high god take I for wytnes
 And also wysely he my soule glade
 I neuir helde me lady ne maystres
 But humble seruaunt to yourz worthynes
 And euir shal while that my lyf my dure
 Aboue enery worldy creature

That ye haue solong of youre benyngnyte
 Holde me in high honoure and nobley
 Where as I was nat worthy for to be
 That thanke I god and you to whom I prey
 Forpelde it you ther is nomore to say
 Vnto my fader gladly wold I wende
 And with him duelle to my lyues ende

There I was fostryd of a childe ful smalle
 Tyll I be dede my lyf there wol I lede
 A wydowe clene in body herte and alle
 For sithen I paue to you my maydenhede
 I am yourz true wyf it is no drede
 God shelde suche a lordes wyf to take
 A nother man to husbonde or to make

And of youre newe wyf god of his grace
 So graunte you wele and prosperite
 For I wol gladly yelde herz my place
 In whiche I was blissful wont to be
 For sithen it lyketh you my lorde quod she
 That somtyme were al my hertes rest
 That I shal go I wyl go whan ye lyst

But there as ye me profre suche dowayr
 As I first brought it is wele in my mynde
 It were my wrechid clothes nothyng fayre

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

The whiche to me were harde to fynde
O gode god how gentyl and how kynde
ye semyd by your speche and youre bisage
The day that made was oure mariage

But soth is sayde alwey I fynde it trewe
For in effecte y preuyd it is on me
Loue is nat olde as whan it is newe
But certis lorde for none aduersite
To dye in this caas it shal nat be
That euir in worde in werke I shalke repente
That I you geue my herte in hooke entent

My lorde ye wote that in my faders place
ye dyd me strypp oute of my poure wede
And richely ye me cladde of youre grace
To you brought I nought elles but of drede
But feyth nakidnesse and my maydenhede
And here agayn my clothyng I restore
And eke my weddyng ryng for euir more

The remenaunt of youre iewelles redy they be
Within youre chambre I dar it saufly seyn
Naked oute of my faders house quode she
I cam and naked must I turne agayn
Al youre plesaunce folowe wolde I feyne
But yet I hope it be nat your entent

That I smokel oute of youre paleys went
ye coude nat do so dishonest a thyng
That thilke wombe in whiche youre children lay
Sholde bifoze the people in my walkyng
Be seen al bare wherfore I you pray
Let me nat lyke a worme go by the way
Remembre you myn owne lorde so dere
I was youre wyf though I vnworthy were
Wherfore in guerdon of my madaynhede

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Whiche that I brought and nat agayn here
As bouche sauf as gyue me to my mede
But suche a smoke as I was wont to were
That I ther with may wrpe the wombe of here
That was your wyf and here I take my leue
Of you myn owne lorde lest I you greue

The smoke quod he that thou hast vpon thy bake
Let it be styll and here it forth with the
But wel bnneth that worde he spake
But wente his wey for routhe and pyte
Bifore the folke her self striped hath se
And in her smoke with fote and here alle bare
Towarde her faders house is she fare

The folke her folowynng wepyng in her wey
And fortune euir they cursed as they gone
But she fro wepyng kept her eyendrye
Ne in this tyme worde spake she none
Her fader that thise tydnynges herde anone
Cursed the day and the tyme that nature
Shope him to be a lyues creature

Foz oute of doute this olde poure man
Was euir suspecte of her mariage
Foz euir he demyd sithen it began
That whan the lorde had fulfilled his coratge
He wolde thynke it were a disperatge
To his estate so lowe foz to light
And boyden her as sone as euir he myght

Ayent his doughter hastely goth he
Foz he by noyse of folke kne we her comyng
And with her olde cote as it myght be
He heueryd her ful soroufully wepyng
But on her body myght he it nat bryng
Foz rude was the clothe and she more of age

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

By daies fele than was her mariage
Than with her fadre for a certayn space
Duellid this floure of wyfly pacience
That neuir by her worde ne by her face
Bifore the folke ne in her absence
Ne she wold she that her was done offence
Ne of her high estate no remembraunce
Ne hadde she as by any maner countenaunce

No wondre was for in her grete estate
Her goost was euir in pleyne humylite
No tendre mouthe ne herte delicate
No pompe ne semblaunce of rialte
But ful of paciente benygnyte
Discrete and prydelesse and ay honourable
And ay to her husbonde meke and stable

Men speke of Job and moost for his humblenesse
As clerkes whan them lyst can wele endite
Namely of men but in sothfastnes
Though clerkes pryse women but a lyte
Ther can no man in humblenes them acuyte
As women can ne can be half so true
As women been but it be falce of newe

Explicit Quinta pars

Et incipit pars Sexta

F Ro Boloyne is this erle of paup come
Of whiche the fame spronge bothe les & more
And in the peoples eris alle and some
Was tolde how that he a newe marke fesse
With him brought in suche pompe and riches
Thot neuir was ther seen with mannys ey
So noble araye in al west lumbardy
The marques whiche that shope and knewe al this

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Or that this erle was come sent his messagge
For that sely poure creature Grypsilidis
And she with humble herte and glade bysagge
Nat with no swellpyng thought in her coragge
Cam at his heest and on her knees her sette
And reuerently and wysely she him gret

Grypsilde quod he my Wyl is ful vtterly
This mayden that weddyd shalbe to me
Receyued be to morowe also ryally
As it is possible in myn house to be
And eke that euery wight in his degre
Haue his estate in spttynng and in seruise
And hight plesauce as ye can best deuyse

I haue no woman suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for to arzaie in ordeuaunce
After my lyst and therfore wolde I sayn
That thyn were al suche manere of gouernaunce
Thou knowest eke of olde al my plesauce
Though thyn arzaie be badde and euyl besey
Do thy deuoure yet at the lest wey

Nat only lorde that I am glade quod she
To do youre lust but I desire also
you first to please and serue in my degre
Without fayntyng and shalie euir mo
Ne neuir for no wele ne for no wo
Ne shal the goost within my herte stynt
To loue you best with alle my true entent

And with that worde she gan the house to dight
And tables for to sette and beddes for to make
And peyned her to do alle that she myght
Prayng the chamberers for goddes sake
To haste them and fast swepe and shake
And she the moost seruyfable of alle

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Hath euery chambre arzaped and his halle
Aboute the vndryn this erle to gan light
That with him brought these noble children twey
Foz whiche the people ran to se that sight
Of their arzape richely they were beseye
And than at erst among them they sey
That walter was no foole though that him lest
To chaunte his wyf for it was for the best
Foz she is fayrez as they deme alle
Than is grisilde and more tendre of age
And fayrer fruyte bitwene them shal fal
And more plesaunt for her high bygnage
Her brotther eke so fayre was of bysage
That them to se the people hath caught plesaunce
Comendynng now the marques gouernaunce
O stor my people euir vn sadde and vntrue
Ay vndiscrete and chauntyng as a bane
Delityng euir in romble that is new
Foz lyke the mone ay waye and wane
Ay ful of clappyng dere ynough a Jane
youre dome is fals youre constaunce euyl preuyth
A ful grete foule is he that on you leuyth
Thus sayd sad folke in that cite
Whan that the people garyd bp and down
Foz they were glade right for the nouelte
To haue a newe lady of their toun
No more of this now make I mencion
But to grisilde agayn I wyl me dresse
And tel her constaunce and her besynesse
Ful besy was grisilde in euery thyng
That to the fest was tho appertynent
Right naught was she abashed of her clothyng
Though it were rude and somdele eke to rent

The Clerkes tale of D y e n f o r d e

But With glade chere to the gate is Went
With othez folke to grete the marke fesse
And after that doth her Besynesse

With right glade chere she his gastes receyued
And so connyngly eche in his degre
That no defaute no man perceyued
But ay they Wondred What she myght be
That in so poure array Was for to se
And coude suche honoure and reuerence
And Worthely they prysen her prudence

In alle this meane While she ne stynte
This mayde and eke her Brothez to comende
With alle her hert in ful benygtne entent
So wele that no man coude her pryce amende
But at the last Whan that lordes Wende
To sitte down to mete he gan to calle
Grisilde as she Was besy in the halle

Grisilde quod he as it Were in his pley
How lyketh the my Wyf and her beaute
Right wele quod she my lorde for in gode fey
A fayrez sa we I neuir none than is she
I pray to god yeue her gode prosperite
And so hope I he wol to you sende
Plesauce ynough to your lyues ende

W thing I beche you and warne also
That ye nat prycke With no tourmentyng
This tendre mayde as ye haue doo moo
For she is fostred in her norissyng
More tenderly and to my supposyng
She coude nat aduersite wele endure
As coude a poure fostred creature

And Whan this Walter sa we her pacience
Her glade chere and no malice at alle

And he so ofte hadde do to her offence
 And she ay constant and sadde as a wal
 Contynuyng euir her innocence ouir alle
 This sturdy marques gan his hert dresse
 To rewe vpon her wisly stedefastnes

This is ynough grisilde myn quod he
 Be now no more agast ne euyl appayed
 I haue thy feyth and thy benygnyte
 As wele as euir woman was assayed
 In grete estate oz pouerly arayed
 Now knowe I dere wyf thy stedfastnes
 And her in armes toke and gan her kyssse

And she for wondre toke of it no kepe
 She herde nat what thyng he to her sayde
 She ferde as she had stert oute of her slepe
 Tyl she oute of her masidnes abreyed
 Grisilde quod he by god that for vs deyed
 Thou arte my wyf ne none othez I haue
 Ne neuir had. so god my soule saue

This is thy doughter whiche thou hast supposed
 To be my wyf that othez feithfully
 Shal be myn heire as I haue purposed
 Thou bare him in thy body truly
 At Boleyne haue I kept them pryuely
 Take them ayen for now may st thou nat say
 That thou hast lozn none of thy children t wey

And folke that othez wyse haue sayde by me
 I warne them wele that I haue doon this dede
 For no malice ne for no cruelte
 But for to assay in the thy womanhede
 And nat to sie my children god forbede
 But for to kepe them pryuely and styлле
 Tyl I thy purpos knewe and thy wyлле

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Whan she this herde in swonyng down she fallith
For pytous ioye and after her swounyng
She to bothe her yong children callith
And in her armes ful tenderly wepyng
Embraced them and tenderly kyssyng
Ful lyke a modre with her salt teris
She badith bothe theire visage and her heres

Whiche a pytous thyng it was to se
Her swounyng and her pytous voyce to here
Graunt mercy lord god thanke you quod she
That ye haue saued me my children dere
Now reche I neuiz to be dede euyr here
Sithen I stonde in your loue and in youre grace
No doute of deeth ne whan my spirite pace

Tendre o dere o yong children myne
Your woful modre wende ful stedefastly
That cruel houndes or som foule wermyn
Had etyn you but god of his mercy
And your benygtne fadre so tenderly
Hath doon you hepe and in that same stounde
Al sodenly she swapt down to grounde

And in her swoune so sadly holdith she
Her children two whan she gan them embrace
That with grete flight and grete difficulte
The children from her arme gan they arace
Many a teze on many a pytous face
Down ran of them that stode there besyde
Whneth aboute her myght they abyde

Walter her gladith and her sorowe skakith
She ryseth vp and abasseth from her traunce
And euery wyght her ioye and fest makith
Tyl she hath caughtt agayn her countenaunce
Walter doth her so feythfulle plesaunce

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That it was deynpte for to se the chere
Bitwene them two now they be mette in fere

Thise ladies whan they theire tyme say
Haue taken her and in to chambre anone
And striped her oute of her rude aray
And in a clothe of golde that bright shone
With a crowne of many a riche stone
Upon her hede. they in to the halle her brought
And there she was honoured as her ought

Thus hath this pytous day a blisful ende
For euery man and woman doth his myght
This day in myrthe and reuel to spende
Tyl on the welkyn shone the sterryslyght
For more solempne in euery manny sight
This feste was and of grete costage
Than was the reuel of theire mariage

Ful many a yere in high prosperite
Byuen these two in concorde and in rest
And richely his doughter married he
Vnto a lorde one of the worthiest
Of al Itayle and than in pease and rest
His wyues fadre in his courte he kepith
Tyl the soule oute of the body crepith

His sonne succedith in his heritage
In rest and pees after his faders day
And fortunate was eke in mariage
Al put he nat his wyf in grete assay
This worlde is nat so strong it is no nay
As it hath been in olde tymes yore
And herknyth what this autouze sayth therfore

This story is sayd nat for that wyues sholde
Folowe Grisilde as in high humylite
For it were impoortable though they wolde

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

But for that euery Wight in his degre
Shulde be constante in alle aduersite
As was grisilde wherfore petrazh writeth
This story whiche with high style he endityth
For sithen a woman was so pacient
Vnto a mortal man wele more we ought
Receyue al in gode that god vs sent
For grete shylle is. he preue that he wrought
But he ne temptith no man that he bought
As sayth seint Jame if ye his epistel rede
He preyth folke but a day it is no nede

And suffreth vs as for oure exercise
With sharpe scorges and aduersite
ful of te to be bete in sondry wise
Nat for to knowe oure wylle but certis he
Or we were born knewe al oure freelte
And for oure best is alle his gouernaunce
Pete vs lye than in bertuous suffraunce

But one worde herk neth lordynnges or I go
It were fulharde to fynde now a dayes
Grisilides in al a countre thre or two
For if they were put to suche assayes
The golde of them hath so badde alayes
With bras. for though it be fayre at eye
It wolde rather brist a two than plye

For whiche here for the wyues loue of Bath
Whoos lyf and secte myghty god mayntene
In high maystrye or elles were if scathe
I wyl with lusty hert fresshe and grene
Say you a song to glade you I wene
And let vs stynt of earnest matere
Herk neth my songe that sayth in this manere

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Venuoye de Chaucez a les
marietz te nre temps

¶ Crisilde is dede and eke her pacience
And bothe at ones buried in a tayle
For whiche I crye in open audience
No wedded man so hardy be to assaile
His wifes pacience in truste to fynde
Crisyldes. for certayn he shal fayle
¶ O noble wyues ful of high prudence
Let nat humylite poure tunges nayle
Ne let no clerke haue cause of diligence
To wryte of you a stozz of grete meruayle
As of Crisilde pacient and kynde
Lest cheuache you swallow in her entrayle
Foloweth ecco that holdith no silence
But euir aunsweryng at the countertayle
Be nat a daffyd for your innocence
But sharply take on you the gouernayle
Enprentith wele that lesson in your mynde
For comune proufet seyth it may auayle
ye arche wyues stondeth at defence
Sithen ye be strong as is a grete camayle
Ne suffre nat that men do you offence
But sklendre wyues as feble in batayle
Beth egre as a tigre is fer in ynde
By clappyng as a mylle I you counseyle
Ne dredith them nat do them no reuerence
For thouth thy husbonde armyd be in mayle
Thy arrowes of thy crabbid eloquence
Shal perse his brest and eke his auentayle
In ielousye I rede eke that thou him blynde
And shalt make him couche as a quayle
If thou be fayre there folke been in presence

The Nonnes prologue

Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparayle
If thou be foule be fre of thy dispence
To gete the frendes ay do thy trauayle
Be ay of chere aslight as leef on lynde
And lete him care wepe wrynge and wayle

Here endith the tale of the clerke of Wyenforde

Verba hospitis

t His worthy clerke whan endyd was his tale
Dure hoost sayde and swore by rockes bones
We were lyuez than a barelle of ale
My wyf at home herde this legende onys
This is a gentyl tale for the nonys
As to my purpos wylt ye my wylle
But thyng that wylle nat be let it be stylle

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the Nonnys prologue

t He mynistre and noziffyng bnto byces
Whiche that men clepe in englysshe ydelnes
Whiche that is porter of the pate of delices
To eschewen and by their contrazy them oppresse
That is to say by leful besynes
Wele ought we to done alle oure entent
Lest that the feende with ydelnesse vs hent
For he with his thousand cordes slye
Contynually vs wayeth to be clappe
Whan he may man in ydelnesse aspye
He can solightly cathe him in his trappe
Tyl that a man be hent right by the lappe
He nys nat ware the fende hath him in honde
Wele ought vs werke and ydelnesse withstonde
And thought men drede neuiz for to dye
Yet se men wele by reason doutles

The Nonnes prologue

That ydelnesse is open slogardy
Of whiche ther comyth neuir no gode encesse
And se that slough her holdith in a lees
Only for to slepe and ete and drynke
And to deuoure al that othez swynke
And for to put vs from suche ydelnes
That cause is of grete confusioun
I haue here doon my feythful besynesse
Afters the legende and translacioun
Right so thy glorious lyf and passioun
Thou with thy garlonde wrought of rose of lyle
The mene I mayde and martyr scint Cecily
And thou that floure arte of virgynes alle
Of whome that Bernarde lust so wele to wryte
To the at my first begynnynge I calle
Thou comforte of vs wreches do me endite
Thy maydens deth that wan through her merite
The eternalle lyf and of the feend victory
As men may afters rede in her story
Thou mayde and modre doughter of thy sonne
Thou welke of mercy synful soules to cure
In whom that god of bounte chaas for to wonne
Thou humble and high ouir euery creature
Thou noblest so ferforth ouir nature
That no disdeyne thy makez hadde of kynde
His sonne in blode and flesshe to clothe and wynde
Whiche in the cloyster of thy blissful sides
Toke mannes shappe the eterne loue and peas
That of thy tryne compass lorde and gyde is
Whom heuyn and erthe and see withouten lees
By herpen and thou virgyn wembelees
Bare of thy body and duellest mayde pure
The creatouze of euery creature

Assemblyd is the magnificence
 With mercy godenesse and with pyte
 That thou that arte the soun of excellence
 Nat only helpest them that prayeth the
 But often tyme of thy benignyte
 Ful frely or that man thy helpe seche
 Thou gost bifoze and art ouze soules leche
 Now helpe thou blisful and meke fayre mayde
 We slemyd wretche in this deserte of galle
 Thy nke on the woman of Canane that sayde
 That whelpes ete some of the the cromes smalle
 That from their lordes table been y falle
 And though that I vnworthy sonne of eue
 Be synful yet accepte my beleue

And for that feyth is dede withoute werkes
 So for to werke yeue me wytte and space
 That I be quytte from thens there moost derke is
 O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace
 Be myn aduocate in that high place
 There as withouten ende is sunge of anne
 Thou cristes modre doughter dere of anne

And of thy light my soule in pryson light
 That troubled is by the cogitacioun
 Of my body and also by the wight
 Of earthly lust and false affectioun
 Of haunyn of the refute o saluacioun
 Of them that been in sorowe and distresse
 Now helpe for to my worke I wol me dresse

yet I pray you that rede that I write
 For yeue me that I do no diligence
 This ilke story besely to endite
 For bothe haue I the wordes and the sentence
 Of him that at the seyntes reuerence

The Nonnes prologue

The story wrote and folowed her leggende
And pray you that ye Wyl my Werke amende

First wolde I you the name of seint cecily
Expoune as men may in her story se
It is to say in englysshe heuyynes lyle
For pure chastnes of birginyte

Or for she whithnes had of honeste
And grene of conscience and of good fame
The swete sauoure lyle was her name

Or cecily is to say the wey to blynde
For she ensample was by good techyng

Or elles cecily as I writen fynde
As ioyned by a maner conyng

Of heuy and lya in her in figuryng
The heuy is set for though of holynes
And lya for her lastyng besynesse

Cecily may eke be sayd in this manere
Wantyng of blyndenesse for her gretelight

Of sapience and for her the wys clere

Or elles lo this maydens name bright
Of heuy and leos comyth of whiche by right
Men myght her wele the heuy of people calle
Ensample of gode and wyse werkes alle

For leos people in englysshe is for to say
And right as men may in the heuy se

The sonne and mone the sterres euery wey
Right so men goostly in this mayden fre

Sawynng of feyth the grete magnamynite
And eke the clerenes ful of sapience

And sondry werkes bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers wypte
That heuy is swyft and rounde and eke brennyng
Right so was fayre cecily the whyte

The Nonnes Tale

Ful swyft and in euery gode workyng
And rounde and hole in gode perseueryng
And brennyng euiz in charite ful brigght
Now haue I declared you what she hight

Here endith the Nonnes prologue
And begynneth her tale



¶ His mayden brigght Cecily as her legend sayth
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble kynde
And from her cradyl by fostryd in the feyth
Of crist and bare his gospel in her mynde
She neuir seced as I wryten fynde
Of her prayer and god to loue and drede
Besekyng him to kepe her maydenhede
And whan this mayde sholde bnto a man
y weddyd be that was ful yong of age
Whiche that y clypped was Valerian

The Nonnes Tale

And day was come of her mariage
She ful deuoute and humble in her corage
Vndre her robe of golde that sat ful feyre
Had next her flesshe y cladde her in an heyre
And while that the orgaynes made melody
To god aboue thus in her herte song she
O lord my body and eke my soule tye
On wemmyd lest I confounded be
And for his loue that dyed vpon the tre
Euery secounde and thridde day she fast
Ay abydyng in her orisons ful fast

The nyght cam and to bedde must she goon
With her husbonde as it was the manere
And pryuelly she sayde to him anone
O swete and wele belouyd spouse dere
Ther is a conceple and ye wyl it here
Whiche that right fayne I wolde to you sey
So that ye swere ye wyl nat it bewry

Valerian gan fast to her swere
That for no caas ne thyng that myght be
He sholde neuiz to none bewrethyn her
And than at erst to him sayde she
I haue an aungel whiche that louyth me
That with grete loue wherso I wake oz slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

And if that he may fele oute of drede
That ye me touche oz loue in bylonye
He right anone wyl sle you with the dede
And in youre pouthe thus shal ye dye
And if that ye in clene lyf me tye
He wol you loue as me for youre clene sse
And shewe to you his ioy and his brightnes
This Valerian corrected as god wolde

The Nonnes Tale

Aunswerde agayn if I shal truste the
Lete me that aungel se and him beholde
And if that it a verzy aungel be
Than wol I do as thou hast prayed me
And if thou loue a nother man for sothe
Right with this swerde than wol I sle you both

Cecily aunswerde anone right in this wyse
If that ye lyst the aungel shal ye se
So that ye trowe on criste and you baptyse
Goth forth to via appia quod she
That from this toun ne stonndith but myles thre
And to the poure folkes that there dwell
Sey them as that I shal you telle

Tel them that I Cecily you to them sent
To shewe you gode vrbān the olde
For secrete nedes and for gode entent
And whan that ye seint vrbān haue beholde
Telle him the wordes that I to you tolde
And whan that he hath purged you from synne
Than shal ye see the aungel or we twynne

This valerian is in to the place gone
And right as he was taught by her lernyng
He fonde this holy man vrbān anone
Among the seyntes berielleslowtyng
And he anone withouten tariyng
Dyd his messatte and whan that he hadde tolde
Vrbān for ioye gan his hondes by holde

The teris from his epen lete he falle
Almyghty god o Jesu crist quod he
Sowez of chast counceyl hierd of vs alle
The fruyte of that sede of chastite
That thou hast sowe in Cecily take to the
So lyke a besy be withouten gyle

The Nonnes Tale

The seruyth ay thyn owne thralle cecile
For that spouse that she toke but newe
ful lyke a fers loun she sendith here
As meke as euir was any lambe to ewe
And with that worde anone there gan appere
An olde man y cladde in white clothes clere
That hadde a boke with lettre of gold in honde
And gan bifoze Valerian for to stonde

Valerian as dede fel down for drede
Whan he this olde man saue stonndyng so
Whiche forth with anon he herde him rede,
O lord of alle o feyth o god withouten mo
O cristendome o fadre of alle also
Aboue alle and ouir alle euery where

These wordes al with gold writen were
Whan this was reddde than sayd this olde man
Deuyst thou this thing or no say ye or nay
I leue al thynng quod Valerian
For sother thynng than this I dar wele say
Vndre heyn no wight thynke may
Tho banysshed this olde man he ne wylt where
And pope brban him cristned right there

Valerian goth home and fyndeth Cecily
Within his chambre with an aungel stonde
This aungel hadde of roses and of lily
Crowmys two the whiche he bare in honde
And first to cecily as I vndr stonde
He yaued that one, and after gan he take
That othez to Valerian her make

With body clene and vnwemmyd thought
Kepith ay wele these crownes quod he
From paradise to you them haue I brought
Ne neuir more shal they rotyn be

The Nonnes Tale

Ne lese theire swete sauoure trustith me
Ne neuiz wight ne shalle se them with eye
But he be chaste and hate belony

And thou Valerian for thou so sone
Assentyd to goddes counceple also

Say what thou lyst and thou shalt haue thy bone

I haue a brotther quod Valerian tho

That in this worlde I loue noman so

I pray you that my brotther may haue grace

To knowe the trouthe as I do in this place

The aungel sayde god lyketh thy requeest

And bothe with the palme of martirdome

ye shal come into this blisful feest

And with that worde tyburce his brotther come

And whan that he the sauoure vndre nom

Whiche that the roses and the lylpes cast

Within his hert he gan to wondre fast

And sayd I wondre this tyme of the yere

Whens that this swete sauoure comyth so

Of roses and lylpes that I smelle here

For though I hadde them in myn hondes two

The sauoure myght in me no deppez go

The swete smelle that in my herte I fynde

Hath chaunged me al in an othez kynde

Valerian sayde two crownes haue we

Snowe white and rose rede that shyneth clere

Whiche that thyn eyn haue no myght to se

And as thou smellyst through my prayer

So shalt thou se them leue brotther dere

If it so be thou withouten flouthe

Beleue a right and knowe berzy trouthe

Tyburce aunswerde sayst thou this to me

In sotfastnes oz in dreame I herkyn this

The Nonnes Tale

In dremps quod Valerian haue we be
Vnto this tyme brother myn y wys
But now at erst oure duellyng in trouthe is
How wotest thou this quod Tiburce & in what wyse
Quod Valerian that shal I the deuise

The aungel of god hath me the trouthe y taughte
Whiche thou shalt se if thou wylt renye
The ydolles and be clene and elles naught
And of the myracle of the se crownes twey
Seynt ambrose in his preface lyst for to say
Solempnely this noble doctoure dere
Comendith it and sayth in this manere

The palme of martirdome for to rescyue
Seint cecile fulfilled of goddes yeste
The worlde and eke her chambre gan she weyue
Witnes Cecily and Tiburces shryfte
To whiche god of his bounte wolde shyfte
Crownes two of floures swete smellynge
And made his aungel them the crownes bryng

The mayde hath brought them to the blisse aboue
The worlde hath wylt that it is worthy certayn
Deuocioun and chastite wele for to loue
Tho she wde him Cecily alle open and pleyne
That al ydolles been but a thyng in bayne
For they be dombe and therto they be deef
And charged him his ydolles for to leef

Who so nat trowith this a beest he is
Quod tho Tiburce if I shalle nat lye
And she gan kyssse his brest that herde this
And was ful glade he coude trouthe aspye
This day I take the for myn alpe
Sayde this blissyd fayre mayden dere
And after that she sayde as ye may here

The Nonnes Tale

So right so as the loue of crist quod she
Made me thy brothers wyf right in this wyse
Anone for myn alye here take I the

Sithen that thou wylt thyn ydelles dyspyse
Go with thy brother now and the baptyse
And make the cleue so that thou may beholde
That aungelles face whiche thy brother of tolde

Tiburce aunswerd and sayd brother dere
First tel me whether I shal and to what man
To whom quod he com forth with right gode chere
I wol the lede vnto the pope vrbayn
To vrbayn brother myn valerian

Quod tho tyburce wylt thou me thy dre lede
He thynketh that it were a wondre drede

Ne mene ye nat vrbayn quod he tho
That is so ofte dampned to be dede
And woneth in halles alwey to and fro
And dar nat onys put forth his hede
Men sholde him brenne in a fyre so rede
If he were foude if men myght him aspye
And we also to bere him company

And while we seke that dyuinyte
That is hyd in heuy pruelye
Algate brent in this worlde shal we be
To whom Cecily aunswerde boldly
Men myght drede wele and skilfully
This lyf to lose myn owne dere brother
If this were luyng only and none othez

But there is better lyf in othez place
That neuiz shalbe lost ne drede the noughit
Whiche goddes sonne vs tolde througth his grace
That faders sonne hath al thynng wrought
And alle that wrought is with a skilful thought

The Nonnes Tale

The goost that from the fadre gan procede
Hath souled him withouten any drede

By worde and by myracle be goddes sonne
Whan he was in the worlde declared here
That there is othez lyf there men may wonne
To whom aunswerd tyburce o sustre dere
Ne saydest thou right now in this manere
Thez nas but one god lord in sothfastnes
And now of thre how mayst thou bere wytnes

That shal I tel quod she or that I go
Right as a man hath sapiences thre
Memory engyne and intellecte also
So in suche beynng of dypuinyte
Thre persones may there right wele be
Tho gan she there ful besily him preche
Of cristes sonne and of his peynes teche

And many poyntes of his passioun
How goddes sonne in this worlde was withholde
To do mankynde pleyng remissioun
That been bounde in synnes and cares colde
Alle these thynges she to tyburce tolde
And after this tyburce in god entent
With valerian to pope vrbayn went

That thanked god and with glade hert and sight
He cristned him and made him in that place
Parfyte in his lernynng goddes knyght
And after this tyburce gat suche grace
That euery day he sa we in tyme and space
The aungel of god and euery maner bone
That he god askyd it was spedde ful sone

It were ful harde by ordre for to sayn
How many wondres iesus for him wrought
But at the last to telle shorte and playn

The Nonnes Tale

The sergēauntes of the toun them sougħt
And them bi fore almache the prefecte brought
Whiche them apposed and kne we al their entent
And to the ymage of Iubitez them sent

And sayd who so wol do no sacrifice
Swappe of his hede this is my sentence here

Anone these martirs that I you deuyse

One maximus that was an officere

Of the prefectes and his counsellere

Them hent and the seyntes forth ladde

Him self he wept for pyte that he hadde

Whan maximus hadde herde the seyntes loze

He gat hym of the turmentours leue

And had them to his house withouten more

And with their prechynge or it was eue

They gan fro the turmentoures for to reue

And from mayme and fro his folke echone

The fals seyth to trow in god allone

Cecily cam whan it was woyn nyght

With prestys that them cristned al in fere

And after ward whan day was woyn light

Cecily sayde them with a ful stede fast chere

Now cristes owen knyghtes leef and dere

Cast al a wey the werkes of derknes

And arme you with the armes of brightnes

ye haue forsoth done a grette batayle

your cours is done youre seyth hath you conseruyd

Goth to the crowne of lyf that may nat fayle

The rightfulle iugge whiche ye haue seruyd

Shal yeue it you as ye haue it deseruyd

And whan this thyng was sayde as I deuyse

Men ledde them forth to do sacrifice

But whan they were to the place y brought

To telle shortly the conclusioun
 They nolde encence ne sacrifice right naught
 But on their knees sytten them adoun
 With humble herte and sadde deuocioun
 And losen bothe their hedes in the place
 Ther soules went to the kyng of grace

This maximus that sa we this thyng betyde
 With pytous teris tolde it anone right
 That he their soules sa we to heuyn glyde
 With aungels ful of clernes and light
 And with his worde conuertyd many a wight
 For whiche almachius dyd him so to bete
 With whippes of lede tyl he his lyp gan lete

Cecily him toke and buried him anone
 By tyburce and Valerian sothly
 Within her buryng place bndre the stone
 And after this almachius hastely
 Badde his mynistres fetch openly
 Cecily so that she myght in his presence
 Do sacrifice and subitez encence

But they conuertyd at her wyse loze
 Wepte ful sore and yaued ful credence
 Vnto her worde and cryde more and more
 Crist goddes sonne whiche withoute difference
 Is very god this is oure sentence

That hath a seruaunt so gode him to serue
 This with o voyce we crye though we sterue

Almachius that herde of this doyng
 Bad fetch Cecily that he myght her se
 And alder first this was his askyng
 What maner woman art thou quod he
 I am a gentyl woman born quod she
 I aske it the quod he though it the greue

The Nonnes Tale

Of thy religioun and of thy beleue
Why than began ye poure questioun folily
Quod she that wolde two aunsweres concluden
In one demaunde ye ashyd lewdly
Almache aunswerde to that similitude
Of whens comyth thyn aunswere so rude
Of whens quod she. Whan that she was freyned
Of conscience and of gode feyth bnfeyned
Almachius sayde takest thou none hede
Of my powez and she aunswerd him thys
poure myght quod she is ful lytel to drede
for euery mortalle mannys powez nys
But lyke a bladder ful of wynde y wys
for with a nedelles poynte whan it is blowe
May alle the bost of it be leyde ful lowe
ful wrongfully began thou quod he
And in wrong is yet al thy perseueraunce
wotest thou nat how oure prynces mighty and fre
haue thus comaunded and made ordenaunce
That euery cristen wight shal haue penaunce
But if that he his cristendome withsay
And goon al quyte if he wyl it reney
poure princes erzen as poure nobley doth
Quod tho cecile in a wode sentence
ye make vs gyltye and it is nat sothe
for ye that knowe wele oure innocence
for asmoche as we do ay reuerence
To criste and for we here a cristen name
ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame
But we that knowe that name so
for vertuous we may it nat withsaye
Almache aunswerde these one of these two
Do sacrifice oz cristendome reney

The Nonnes Tale

That thou may schape by that weye
At whiche worde this holy blisful mayde
Can for to laughe and to the iuge sayde

W iuge confused in thy nycte
Wolt thou that I resceyue innocence
To make me a wyched wight quod she
Lo he dissimyleth here in audience
He starith and wodith in his aduertence
To whom almache sayd o sely wretche
Ne wotest thou nat hou fer my wytte may stretche

Haue nat oure myghty prynces penyng
To me both powez and auctorite
To make folke bothe to dye and lyuen
Why spekyt thou than so proudely to me
I speke naught but stedfastly quod she
Nat proudely for I say for my syde
We hate dedely that byce of pryde

And if thou drede nat a soth for to here
Than wyl I she we al openly by right
Thou that hast made a ful gretelc syng here
Thou sayst thy prynces haue yeue the myght
Bothe for to sle and for to quychen a wight
That thou mayst only but lyf bereue
Thou hast none othez powez ne no leue

But thou mayst say thy princes haue the maked
Mynistre of deth for if thou speke of mo
Thou liest for thy powere is ful nabyd
Do wey thy boldnesse sayd almache tho
And do sacrifice to oure goddes or thou go
I reche nat what wrongt thou me profez
For I can suffre as can a philosophez

But that wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekyt of oure goddes here quod he

The Nonnes Tale

O Cecily aunswere o nyce creature
Thou saydest no worde sithen thou spakest to me
That I ne knowe ther with thy nyce
And that thou were in euery maner wyse
A lewde officer and a lewde iustise

There lacketh no thyng of thy better eyen
But thou art blynde for thyng that we se al
That is a stone that men may wele aspyen
That ilke stone a god thou wylt it calle
I rede the let thy honde vpon it falle
And taste it wele and stone thou shalt it fynde
Sithen that thou seest nat with thy eyen blynde

It is a shame that the people shal
So scorne the and laughe at thy foly
For comonly men wote it wele ouir alle
That myghty god is in heuynnes hie
And these ymages wele thou mayst aspye
To the ne to them self may do no profette
For in effecte they be nat worthe a myte

This and suche othez wordes sayde she
And he woyte wrothe and bad men sholde her lide
Home vnto her house and in her house quod he
Brenne her in a bathe of flamys rede
And as he hadde right was it do in dede
For in a bathe they gan her fast shyppen
And nyght and day fyre they vndre betyn

The long nyght and eke the day also
For al the fyre and eke the grete hete
She sat al colde and felt no maner wo
It made her nat a droppe for to swete
But in that bathe her lyf she motlete
For almachius with a ful wyched eulent
To sle her in bathe his sonde to her sent

The Nonnes Tale

Thre strokes in the necke he smote her tho
The turmentoure but for no maner chaunce
He myght nat smyte her necke a two
And for ther was that tyme an ordenaunce
That noman sholde do no persone suche penaunce
The fourth stroke to smyte soft or soze
This turmentoure ne durst do no more

But half dede with her necke corruen there
He left her lye and on his wey he went
The cristen folke whiche that aboute her were
With shetes haue the blode by hent

Thre daies lyued she thus in this turment
And neuir cesed them the feyth to teche
That she had fostryd them she gan to preche

And them she paue her meuables and her thyng
And to gode vrbay betoke them tho
And sayde I asked this of heuyghyng
To haue respite thre daies and no mo
To recomende to you or that I go

These soules lo and that I may do wirche
Here of my house perpetually a chirche

Seint vrbay with his dehyngs pryuelly
The body fet and buried it by nyght
Among his othez seyntes honestly
Her house the chirche of seynt cecily hight
Saynt vrbay halowed it as he wele myght
In whiche vnto this day in noble wyse
Men do to criste and to his seyntes seruise

Here endith the Nonnes tale
And here betynneth the prologue
Of the chanons yeman

The Nonnes Tale

Whan tolde was the lyf of seint Cecile
Or we hadde ryden fully fyue myle
At Boughston vndre ble vs gan a take
A man that clothed was in clothes blake
And vndrenethe he ware a white surplice
His hakney whiche was of pomelgryce
So swette he that wondre was to se
It semyd that he hadde pryched myles thre
Aboute the patrel stode the some ful hye
He was of some as flyched as a pye
The hakney eke that his yeman rode vpon
So swette that vnnethes myght it goon
A male twyfolde vpon his croppyn lay
It semyd that he carped lytel aray
Alight for somez rode this worthy man
And in myn herte to wondre I began
What that he was tyl that I vndrestode
How that his cloke was sowed to his hode
For whiche whan I hadde longt auysed me
I demyd him som chanon for to be
His hatte hyng at his bake down by a lace
For he hadde ryden more than trotte or pace
He rode ay prychyng as he were wode
A clote leef he hadde leyde vndre his hode
For swete and for to kepe his hede fro hete
But it was ioye for to se him swete
His forehede droppyd as a stylatory
Were ful of planteyn or of peritory
And whan he was come he gan crye
God saue quod he this ioly company
Fast haue I pryched quod he for youre sake
Bicause that I wolde you ouir take
To ryde in this mery company

His yeman was eke ful of curtesye
 And sayde sires now in the mozowe tyde
 Dute of youre hostrye I sawe you ryde
 And warned here my lord and souerayn
 Whiche that to ryde with you is ful fayn
 For his disporte he loueth daliaunce
 Frend for thy warnyng god gyue the gode chaunce
 Than sayde oure hoost certayn it wolde seme
 Thy lord were wyse and so I may wele deme
 He is ful iocunde also dar I ley
 Can he ough t telle a mery tale or t wey
 With whiche he glade may this company
 Who sir my lord. ye sir withouten lye
 He can of myrthe and eke of iolite
 Nat but ynow also sir trustith me
 And ye him knewe as wele as do I
 Ye wolde wondre how wele and craftely
 He coude werke and that in sondry wyse
 He hath taken on him many a grete empryse
 Whiche were ful hard for any that is here
 To bryng aboute but they of him it lere
 As homely as he rydeth amonges you
 If ye him knewe it wolde be for youre prow
 Ye wolde nat forgoon his acqeyntaunce
 For mekyl good I dar ley in balaunce
 Al that I haue in my possessioun
 He is a man of high discrecioun
 I warne you he is a passyng wyse man
 Wele quod oure hoost I pray the telle me than
 Is he a clerke or none tel me what he is
 A clerke nay nay he is gretér than a clerke y wys
 Sayd this yeman and in wordes fe we
 Hoost and of his craft som what wol I she we

The prologue of the chanons yeman

Sir my lord can suche a subtelte
But alle his crafte ye may nat wytte of me
For al the grounde to caunterbury town
He coude alle clene turne by so down
And paue it al with siluer and with golde
And whan this yeman hath thus tolde
Vnto oure hoost, he sayde benedicite
This thing is wondre merueylous to me
Sithen that thy lord is of so high prudence
Bicause of whiche sholde men him reuerence
That of his worshippe reckith he so lyte
His ouerest stoppe is nat worth a myte
As in effecte to him so moot I goo
It is alle bandy and to toze also
Why is thy lord so stotyssh the I the pray
And of power is better clothe to be
If that his dede accorde with his speche
Tel me that and that I the besече
Why quod this yeman wherto aske ye me
God helpe me so for he shal neuiz the
But I wyl now auowe that I say
And therfore kepe it secrete I you prey
He is to wyse in feyth as I beleue
That is ouir do it wol neuiz preue
And right as clerkes say it is a byce
Wherfore in that I holde him lewde and nyce
For whan a man hath ouir grete a wytte
Ful oft it happith him to mys vse it
So do my lord and that me greuyth sore
God it amende I can say nomore
Therof no force gode yeman quod oure hoost
Sithen of the connynge of thy lord thou hoost
Tel how he doth tel on now hardely

The prologue of the chanoys yeman

Sithen that he is so crafty and so slye
Where duelle ye if it to telle be
In the subarbes of a toun quod he
Kurhyng in hernys and in lanys blynde
Where as these robbers and these theuys be kynde
Holden theire ferdful pryue residence
As they that dar nat shewe theire presence
So fare we if we shal say the sothe
Now quod oure hoost let me talke tothe
Why art thou so descoloured in thy face
Petyr quod he god yeuyth harde grace
I am so bsd the hote fyre to blowe
That it hath chaunged my coloure I trowe
I am nat wont in no myrroure to pryue
But swynke sore and lerne to multiplie
We blundryn euiz and pouryn in the fyre
And for alle that we fayle of oure desize
For euir we lacke oure conclusioun
To moche folke we do illusioun
And borowe golde be it a pounde or two
Or ten or twelue or many sommes mo
And make them wene at the lest wey
That of a pounde we coude make twey
It is false and ay we haue gode hope
It for to do and after it we grope
But that science is so fer bs biforn
We may nat al though we hadde it sworn
It ouir take it flytte a wey so fast
It wol bs make bettgars at the last
Whyle this yeman was thus in talkyng
This chanon drewe him nere and herde al thyng
Whiche this yeman spake for suspectioun
Of mennys speche euiz hadde this chanon

The prologue of the chanons yeman

Foz caton sayth he that tylyt is
Demyth al thyng to be spoke of him y wys
That was the cause he gan so nyth dra we
To this yeman to herkyn alle his sa we
And thus he sayde to his yeman tho
Holde thou thy peas and speke no mo
Foz if thou do thou shalt it dere aby
Thou sclaudrest me here in this company
And eke discoueryst that thou sholdest hyde
ye quod oure hoost tel on what so betyde
Of alle this thretynge reche thou nat a myte
In feyth quod he no more I do but lyte
And whan this chanon sa we it wolde nat be
But that this yeman wolde telle his pryuyte
He fledde a wey for verry sorowe and shame
A ha quod the yeman here shal ryse a game
Al that I can anoon I wol you tel
Sithen he is goon the foule fende him quelle
Foz neuir herafter wol I with him mete
Foz peny ne for pounde I you behete
He that me first brought to that game
Or that he dye sorowe hane he and shame
Foz it is earnest to me by my feyth
That fele I wele what that any man sayth
And yet for alle my smert and alle my greef
Foz al my sorowe labour and myscheef
I coude neuir leue it in no wyse
Now wold to god my wytte myght suffise
To telle alle that longith to that arte
But natheles you wol I tel a parte
Sithen that my lord is goon I wol nat spare
Suche thyng as I knowe I wol declare

The tale of the chanons yeman

Here endith the prologue of
the Chanons yeman
And begynneth his tale



W^{ith} this chanon I duelled seyn yere
And of his science am neuir the nere
Al that I hadde I haue lost therby
And god wote so haue mo than I
Of clothyng and of othez gode aray
There as I was wonte to be right freshe and gay
Now may I were an hose vpon myn hede
And where my coloure was bothe white and rede
Now it is wan and of a ledyn he we
Who so it vsyth soze shal he rewe
And of my swynke y blent is myn eye
So suche auantage it is to multiplie
That slydyng science hath made me so bare
That I haue no gode where that euir I fare

The tale of the chonons yeman

And yet I am endettyd so soze therby
Of golde that I bozowbed truly
That whyle I lyue I shal it quyte neuir
Let euery man beware by me for euir
What maner man that castith him therto
If he contynue I holde his thryfte y do
For helpe me god therby shal he nat Wynne
But enpeyre his purse and make his wytte thynne
And whan he through his madnes and his foly
Hath lost his owne gode through iepardy
Than he exciteth othez men therto
To lese their gode as he him self hath do
For vnto wretches ioye it is and ease
To haue their felowes in peyne and disease
For thus was I onys lernyd of a clerke
Of that no charge I wol speke of oure werke
Whan we be there as we shal excersise
Dure elyusshe craft we seme wondre wyse
Dure termys been so clergypalle and so queynte
I blowe the fyre tyl my herte feynte
What sholde I telle eche propozcion
Of thynntes whiche we worke vpon
As on fyre or sey vnces may wele be
Of syluer or some othez quantite
And besy me to telle you the names
Of orpement brent bones iron squames
That into powder grounde be ful smalle
And in an erthen potte how put is alle
And salt petyr and also papyre
Bifozn these powders that I speke of here
And wele y couered with a lampe of glas
And of moche othez thynng whiche that there was
And of the pottys and glasses enlutyng

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The tale of the chanoys yeman

That of the eyre myght passe oute notyng
And of the fyre easy and smert also
Whiche that was made and of the care and wo
That we hadde in oure maters sublymyng
And in amalgamyng and calcenyng
Of quyespluez cleped mercury crude
For alle oure slighetes we can nat conclude
Oure orpement and sublymed mercury
Oure grounden litarge eke on the perfury
Of feche of them of vnces a certayn
Nat helpith vs oure labour is in beyng
And eke oure spirites ascencioun
Ne oure maters that lye al fix a doun
May in oure workyng no thyng auayle
For lost is alle oure labour and trauayle
And alle the coost a twenty deuyll wey
Is lost also whiche we on it ley
For ther is also ful many a nother thyng
That is to oure crafte apperteynyng
Though I by ordre them reherse ne can
Bicause that I am a lewde man
yet wol I tel them as they come to mynde
Though I ne can nat sette them in their kynde
As boole armonyache beerdettrece bozas
And sondry vesselles made of erthe and glas
Oure bynnales and oure descensories
Violes crossolettes and sublymatories
Conturbitees and alembykes eke
And othez suche dere ynough a leek
Nat nedith it to reherse them alle
Waters rubifyng and boles galle
Arsenyh sal armonyake and brymstone
And herbes eke coude I telle many one

The tale of the chanoys yeman

As egyptomyne Valerian and lunary
And othez suche if that me lyst to tary
Dure lampes Brynne nyght and day
To brynge aboute oure craft if that we may
Dure furneyz eke of calcinacioun
And of Waters albiſſycacioun
Unſlecyd lyme chalke gleyre of an eye
Poudres dyuerſe aſſhes dong pyſſe and cleye
Seryd pottes ſalt petyz byttriote
And dyuers ſpyres made of wode and coſe
Sal tartyz alcoſy and ſal preparate
And combuſte maters and coagulate
Cley made with horſe dong mannyſ here and oyle
Of tartre alym glas berme worſte and artgule
Roſaltaz and othez maters enbiſyng
And eke of oure maters encorpozng
And of oure ſyluez citrynacioun
Dure ſementyng and oure fermentacioun
Dure ingottes teſtes and many moo
I wol you telle as me was taughte alſo
The foure ſpirites and the bodies ſeuyñ
By ordre as I herd my lord neuyn
The firſt ſpirite quyche ſiluez clepyd is
The ſecounde ozpement the thridde y wys
Sal armonyacke and the fourth Brymſtone
The bodies ſeuyñ loke them there anon
Sol golde is and luna ſyluez we threpe
Mars iron Mercury quyche ſiluez we clepe
Saturnus lede and iubitez is tyn
And Venus copez by my fader kynne
This curſed craft who wol exerciſe
He ſhalle no gode haue that may ſuffiſe
For alle gode he ſpended theire aboute

The tale of the chanons yeman

Be lese shal therof haue I no doute
Who so that lystith vtter his foly
Let him come forth and lerne to multiply
And euery man that hath ought in his cofre
Let him appere and weye a philosopher
Prest or chanon or any other wight
Though he sytte at his booke day and nyght
In lernyng of this elyssh nyce lore
Alle is in beyn and parde moche more
Is to lerne a lewde man this subtelte
Fy speke nat therof it wol nat be
And can he lettrature or can he none
As in effecte he shal fynde it al one
For bothe two by my saluacioun
Concluden in multiplicacioun
Alliche wele whan they haue alle y doo
This is to sayn they fayle bothe two
yet forgate I to make reher sayle
Of watres corosyf and of lymayl
And of bodies mollificacioun
And also of their enduracioun
Dyles ablacions metalle fusible
To telle you it wolde passe any byble
That owhere is therfore as for the best
Of these names now wol I me rest
For as I trowe I haue tolde ynow
To reyse a feende al loke he neuir so row
A nay let be the philosophers stoon
Bliuer we clepe we seke fast echoon
For hadde we him than were we siker ynowe
But vnto god of heuyn I make auowe
For alle oure craft whan we haue alle y do
And alle oure slepyghte he wel nat come vs to

The tale of the chanons yeman

He hath made vs spende moche gode
For sorowe therof almost we weyen wode
But that gode hope crepith in oure herte
Supposyng euir though we soze smert
To be releuyd by him afterwarde
Suche supposyng and hope is sharpe and hazde
I warne you wele it is to sekyn euir
That future temps hath made men disseuir
In truste therof alle that euir they hadde
Yet of that arte they can nat wey sad
For vnto them it is a bytter swete
So semyth it for ne had they but a shete
Whiche that myght wrappe them in a nyght
And a bratte to walken in by day lyght
They wolde it selle and spende it in this craft
They can nat stynt tyl no thyng be last
And euir more where that they goon
Men may them kenne by smelle of brymston
For al the worlde they stynke as a gote
Theire sauoure is so rammysse and so hote
That though a man a myle from them be
The sauoure wyl enfecte him trustith me
So thus by smellyng and thredbare aray
If that men lyst these folke knowe they may
And if a man wol aske them pryuelly
Why they be clothed so vnthriftely
Right anone they wol roune in his ere
And say if that they aspyed were
Men wolde them sle bicause of theire science
So thus these folke betrayen innocence
Was ouir this I my tale vnto
Or that the potte be on the fyre y do
And metalles a certayn quantite

The tale of the chanons yeman

My lordes them temprith and no man but he
Now is he goon I dar say boldly
For as men say he can do craftely
Algate I wote wele he hath suche a name
And yet ful ofte he rynneth in the blame
And wote ye how ful ofte it farith so
The pot to brekith and fare wele alis do
The metallis been of so grete byolence
Dure walles may nat make them resistance
But if they were wrought of lyme and stone
They perse so and through the walle they gone
And som of them synke down in the grounde
Thus haue we lost by tyme many a pounce
And som ar scatred al the floore aboute
Some lepyth in the roof withouten doute
Though that the feende in oure sight him nat shewe
I trow that he with vs be that ilke shewe
In helle where he is lord and fyre
Ne is ther more wo ne rancor ne yre
Whan that oure pote is broken as I haue sayd
Euery man chyt and holdith him euyl appayed
Some sayde it was of the fyre makyng
Some sayd nay it was of the blowyng
Than was I aferde for that was myn office
Stra we quod the thridde ye be lewde and nyce
It was nat tempryd as it ought to be
Nay quod the fourthe stynte and herkyne me
Bicause oure fyre was nat made of beche
That is the cause and other none sitheche
I can nat telle where on it was along
But wele I wote grete stryf is vs a mong
What quod my lordes ther is no more to doon
Of these parzelles I wol be ware effone

The tale of the chawons yeman

I am right syker that the potte was crased
Be as be may be ye nat amasyd
As vsage is let swepe the floze swythe
Plucke by youre hertes and be glade and blythe
The mulloke on an hepe swepyd was
And on the flooze cast a canuas
And alle the mulloke in a syde y throwe
And siftyd and pyched many a throwe
Parde quod one somwhat of our metalle
yet is ther here though we haue nat alle
And though this thyng myshapped hath as now
Another tyme it may be wele ynow
We must put oure gode in auenture
A marchaunt parde may nat ay endure
Trustith me wele in his prosperite
Somtyme his godes been drenchyd in the see
And somtyme it comyth sauf vntolonde
Peas quod my lorde the nexte tyme I wol fonde
To bryngt oure craste al in an othez plyte
And but I do fires lete me haue the wyte
Ther was a defaute in somwhat wele I wote
A nothez sayde the fyre was ouir hote
But be it hote oz colde I dar say this
That we conclud euir more amys
We fayle alwey of that we wolde haue
And in oure madnes euir more we raue
And whan we be to tydder euerichone
Euery man semyth as wyse as salamon
But alle thyng whiche that shyneth as golde
It is nat golde as I haue herde tolde
Ne euery appyl that is fayre at eye
Nys nat gode what so we clappe oz crye
Right so it farith amonges vs

The tale of the chanons yeman

He that semyth wysest by swete Jesus
Is moost foole whan it comyth to the preef
And he that semyth trewest is a theef
That shal ye knowe or that I from you wende
Be that my tale be tolde vnto an ende
There was a chanon of religioun
Amonges vs wolde enfecte al a toun
Though it were as grete as was ny nyue
Rome Alisaundre troye or other thre
His slighthes and his infynpte falsnesse
Ne coude noman write as I gesse
Though that he myght lyue a thousand yere
In alle the worlde of falsnesse nys his yere
For in his termys he wyl him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so slighly kynde
Whan he comen shal with ony wyght
That he wol make him dote anon right
But it a feende be as him self is
ful many a man hath he begyled or this
And wol if that he lyue may a whyle
And yet men ryde or go many a myle
Him for to seke and haue his acqueyntaunce
Nat knowyng of his fals gouernaunce
And if ye lyst to yeue me audience
I wol it tel here in youre presence
But worshipful chanons religious
Ne demeth nat that I sclaudre youre house
Al though my tale of a chanon be
Of euery ordre som shrewe is parde
As god forbede that al a company
Shalde rewe a synguler manns felony
To sclaudre you it is no thyng myn entent
But to correcte that is mys went

The tale of the chanons yeman

This tale was nat only tolde for you
But eke for other mo ye wote wele how
That amonges cristes apostelles twelue
There nas no traytoure but iudas him selue
Than why sholde we remenaunt haue a blame
That gyltles were by you I say the same
Saue only this if ye wol herken me
If any Judas in youre couent be
Remeuyth him betymes I you rede
If shame or losse may cause any drede
And be nothyng displeased I you pray
But in this caas herken what I say

i In London was a preest Annuelere

That therin hadde duelt many a yere
Whiche was so plesaunt and so seruy sable
Vnto the wyf where as he went to table
That she wolde suffre him no thyng to pay
For borde ne clothyng went he neuiz so gay
And spendyng spluez hadde he right pnowe
Therof no force in ple saunce went his plowe
But for to telle you forth of this chanon
That brought this preest to confusion
This fals chanon cam vpon a day
Vnto the preestes chambre where he lay
Besechyng him to lene him a certayn
Of golde and he wolde quyte him agayn
Lene me a marke quod he but daies thre
At my day I wol sauns fayle quyte it the
And if so be thou fynde me than fals
Another day hang me by the hals
This preest him toke a marke and that as swythe
And this chanon him thanked of tspythe
And toke his leue and went forth his wey

The tale of the chanoys yeman

And at the thridde day Broughte his money
And to this preest he toke his golde attayn
Wherof this preest Was Wondre glade and fayne
Certis quod he no thyng annoyeth me
To lene a man a noble two or thre
Or what thyng Were in my possessioun
Whan he is so true of condicioun
That in no wyse breke he wol his day
To suche a man I can nat say nay
What quod this chanon sholde I be vntrue
Nay that were a thyng fallen of newe
Trowth is a thyng that I wol euiz kepe
Vnto that day in whiche I shal crepe
Into my graue or elles criste forbede
Beleuyth this as sphez as the crede
God I thanke and in gode tyme be it sayde
That ther nas neuir man yet euyl payde
For golde ne siuer that he me lent
Ne neuir falshe in myn herte I ment
And sir quod he now of my pryuyte
Sithen ye so godeliche haue been to me
And kydith to me so grete gentylnesse
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndnesse
I wol you shewe if that ye lyst here
I wol you teche plener the matere
How I can worke in philosophye
Take gode hede ye shal wele se at eye
That I wol a maystrye do or I go
Ye sir quod the preest and wyl ye so
Mary therof I pray you hartely
At youre comaundment sir truly
Quod the chanon and elles criste forbede
To how this theef coude his seruice bede

The tale of the chanons yeman

Ful soth it is that suche profered seruisse
Stynketh as wytnessith the olde wyse
And that right sone I wol it verify
In this chanon rotte of alle trechery
That euirmore delite hath and gladnesse
Suche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse
How cristes people he may to mychief bryng
God kepe vs from his false dissymlyng
Nought wist this preest with whom that he delte
Me of his harme comyng no thyng he felte
O sely preest o sely innocente
With couetyse anone thou shalt be blent
O graceles ful blynde is thy conceyte
No thyng art thou ware of his disceyte
Whiche that this foy shapen hath to the
His wyles his wrenches thou mayst nat see
Wherfore to go to the conclusioun
That referryth to thy confusioun
Unhappy man anon I wol me hys
To tell thy vnwytt and thy foly
Andeke the falsenesse of that othez wretche
As ferforth as my conyng wyl stretche
This chanon was my lord ye wol wene
Sir hoost in feyth and by heuens quene
It was a nothez chanon and nat he
That can an hundred folde more subtelte
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme
Of his falsenesse it dullith me to ryme
Euir whan I speke of his falsehede
For shame of him my chekes weyen rede
Algates they begynne for to glowe
For redenesse haue I none right wele I knowe
In my bysage for fumes dyuerse

The tale of the chanons yeman

Of metalle whiche ye haue herde me reherce
Consumed and wastyd hath my redenesse
Now takith hede of this chanons cursidnesse
Sir quod he to the preest let your man gone
For quycsiluer that we hadde it anone
And let him bryng vnces two or thre
And whan he comyth as fast ye shal se
A wondre thyng whiche ye sa we neuir or this
Sir quod the preest it shal be do y wys
He badde his seruaunt fetch him this thyng
And he al redy was at his byddynng
And went him forth and cam anone agayn
With this quycsiluer shortly for to seyn
And toke the vnces thre to the chanon
And he them leyde wele and fayre adoun
And badde the seruaunt coles for to bryng
That he anon myght go to his workyng
The coles right anon were y sette
And this chanon toke oute a crosselet
Of his bosom and she wde it to the preest
This instrument quod he whiche that thou seeft
Take in thy honde and put thy self therin
Of this quycsiluer an vnce and begynne
In the name of crist to wey a philosophes
Ther be ful fewe whiche I wolde it profes
To shewe them thus moche of my science
For here shal ye se by experience
That this quycsiluer I wol mortify
Right in youre sight anon withouten lye
And make it as gode syluer and as fyne
As there is any in youre purse or myn
Or elles where and make it mallicable
And elles holde me fals and vnstable

The tale of the chanons yeman

Amonges folke for euir to appere
I haue a pou dre that cost me dere
Shal make al gode for it is cause of alle
My connyng whiche I you she we shal
Wopdeth poure man and let him be withoute
And shytt the doze whyle we be there aboute
Dure pryuate that noman vs aspye
Whiles that we worke in this philosophy
Al as he hadde fulfyllled was in dede
This ilke seruaunt anon oute yede
And his mayster shytt the doze anon
And to theire labour spe dely they goon
This preest at this cursed chanons byddyng
Vpon the fyre right anon set this thyng
And blewe the fyre and besped him fulle faste
And this chanon into the crosselet cast
A pou dre nat I neuir wherof it was
y made of chalke of erthe or of glas
Or som what elles was nat worth a flye
To blynde with this preest and hadde him hys
The coles for to couche alle aboue
For in tokenyng that I the loue
Quod this chanon, thyng hondes two
Shal werke al thyng that here shal be do
Gramercy quod this preest and was right glade
And couched the coles as the chanon hade
And while he besp was, this feendly wretche
This false chanon the foule feende him fetche
Dute of his bosom toke a bechyn cole
In whiche ful subtelly was made an hole
And therein was put of syluer lymaile
An vnse and stoppyd was withouten fayle
The hole with wey to kepe the lymaile in

The tale of the chanons yeman

And vnderstonde th that this false gyn
Was nat made there but it was made before
And othez thynges that I you telle shal more
Hereafter whiche he with him brought
Or he cam there him to begyle he thought
And so he dyd or that they yede at Wynne
Eyl he hadde ternyd him he coude nat tWynne
It dullyth me whan that I of him speke
Of his falsehede fayn wolde I me wreke
If I wylt how but he is here and there
He is so variaunt he abyde th no where
But takith hede sires for goddes loue
He toke his cole of whiche I spake aboue
And in his honde he bare it prpuely
And whiles this preeft couched besily
The coles as I you tolde or this
This chanon sayd frende ye doo amys
This is nat couchyd as it ought to be
But sone I shalle amende it quod he
Now let me medle ther with but a while
For I haue of you pyte by seint gyle
Ye be right hote I se how ye swete
Haue here a clothe and wype a wey the wete
And whiles the preeft wyped his face
This chanon toke his cole with soz grace
And leyde it aboue vpon the mydwarde
Of the crosselet and blewe wele after ward
Eyl that the coles gan fast to brenne
Now yeue vs drynke quod the chanon thenne
As swythe al shalbe wele I vnder take
Syt we down and let vs mery make
And whan this chanon his bechyn cole
Hadde broughte and the lymayle oute of the hole

The tale of the chanoys yeman

Into the crosselet it fyl anon down
And so it must nedes by reason
Sithen it so euyn aboue couched was
But therof wpst the preest nothyng allas
He demyd alle the coles lychē gode
Foz of the sight he nothyng vnderstode
And whan this alhamytre sa we his tyme
Kyse by sir preest he sayde and stound by me
And foz I wote wele ingot haue ye none
Go walkeyth forth and bryngeth a chack stone
For I wol make of it the same shappe
That an ingot is if it may happe
And brynge eke with you a bolle or a pan
Ful of water and ye shalle wile se thanne
How that oure besynesse shal turyue and preue
And foz ye shal haue me inno mysbeleue
Ne wrong concept of me in youre absence
I wol nat be oute of your presence
But go with you and come with you agayn
The chambre doze shortly foz to seyn
They opened and shyttre and went theire wey
And forth with them they toke the key
And cam ayen withoute any delay
What shold I tary alle the long day
He toke the chalke and shope it in a wyse
Of an ingotte as I shal you deuyse
I say he toke oute of his owne sleue
A teyn of siluez euyl mot he cheue
Whiche that ne was but an vnce of wythe
And takith hede now of this cursed sight
He shope his ingot in lengith and in brede
Of this teyn withouten any drede
So slightly that the preest it nat aspyed

The tale of the chanons yeman

And in his sleue agayn he gan it hyde
And from the fyre he toke vp the matere
And in the ingot he put it with mery there
And into the wateressel he it cast
Whan that himlyst and had the preest as fast
Done what there is put in thyn honde and grope
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope
What deuyt of helle sholde it ellis be
Shauyng of siluer syluer is sir parde
He put his honde in and toke vp a teryn
Of syluer fyne and glade in euery beyne
Blythe was this preest whan he sawe it was so
Goddes blyssyng and his moders also
And alle halowes haue ye sir chanon
Sayde this preest and I her malisoun
But and ye vouche sauf to teche it me
This noble crafte and this subtelte
I wol be youre man in alle that euer I may
Quod this chanon yet wol I make assay
The secounde tyme that ye may take hede
And be experte in this at youre nede
Another day assay in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science
Let take another vnce quod he tho
Of quyncsiluer withoute wordes mo
And do therwith as ye haue do or this
With that othez whiche that now syluer is
The preest him bespeth al that euir he can
To do as this chanon this cursed man
Comaunded him and fast blewe the fyre
For to come to the effecte of his desyre
And this chanon right in this meane whyle
Al redy was the preest for to begyle

The tale of the chanons yeman

And for countenance in his honde bare
An holowe styche take kepe and be ware
In the ende of whiche an vnce and more
Of syluer lymayle put as sayde is bifoze
Was in his cole and stoppyd with wey wele
For to kepe in his lymayle euery dele
And while the preest was in his besynesse
This chanon with his styche gan it dresse
To him anon and his poude caste in
As he dyderst, the deuyll oute of his shyn
Him turne I pray to god for his falsehede
For he was euir false in thoughte and dede
And with his styche aboue his crosselet
That was ordeyned with that false get
He steryd the coles tyl al relente beganne
The wey apenst the fyre as euery man
But it a fool be wote wele it must nede
And alle that in the styche was oute pede
And in the crosselet hastely fel
Now gode fires what wol ye bet than wel
Whan that this preest was thus bettyled agayn
Supposyng nought but trouthe soth to sayn
He was so glade I can nat expresse
In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse
And to the chanon he profred estsone
Body and gode, ye quod the chanon anon
Though I be poure crafty thou shalt me fynde
I warne the wele yet is ther more behynde
Is there any copez herin quod he
Ye quod the preest siz I trowe ther be
Elles go bye vs som and that as swythe
Now gode siz go forth thy wey and hpythe
He went his wey and with his copyr cam

The tale of the chanons yeman

And the chanon in his honde it nam
And of that copre he weyd oute an vnce
Alle to symple is my tonge to pronounce
As to mynistrer of my wytte the doublenesse
Of this chanon rote of alle cursydnesse
He semyd frendly to them that knewe him nought
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought
It werpeth me to telle of his falsenesse
And natheles yet wol I it expresse
To that entent that men may be ware therby
And for none other cause truly
He put this vnce of copre in his crosselet
And on the fyre as swythe he it set
And cast in poudre and made the preest to blowe
And in his workyng for to stoupe lowe
As he dyd ere and al was but a iape
Right as him lyst the preest he made his ape
And after in the ingot he it cast
And in the panne put it at the last
Of water and in he put his owne hande
And in his sleue as ye bifore hande
Herd me tel and he hadde of siluer a tyn
He slyghtly toke it oute this cursed tyn
On wetyng of the preest of this false crafte
And in the pannes botom he it last
And in the water rombleth to and fro
And wondre pryuelly he toke by also
The coper tyn nat knowyng the preest
And hyd it and him hent by the brest
And to him spake and thus he sayd in game
Stoupeth adoun by god ye be to blame
Helpe me now as I dyd you while ere
Put in youre hond and lokith what is there


The tale of the chanons yeman

This preest toke by this siluer teph anoon
And than sayd the chanon let vs goon
With these thre tynes whiche that we haue wrought
To som goldsmyth to loke if they be ought
For by my feyth I nolde for myn hode
But if they were syluer fyne and good
And that as swythe preuyd it shalbe
Vnto the goldsmyth with these tynes thre
They went and put these tynes in assay
To fyre and hamez myght no man say nay
But that they were as them ought to be
This sottyd preest who was gladder than he
Was neuiz byrde gladder apenst the day
Ne nyghtyngale in the season of may
Was neuiz noon that best lyst to syng
Ne lady lusty in carolyng
Or for to speke of loue or womanhede
Ne knyght in armes to done an hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady dere
Than hadde this preest this sozycraft to lere
And to the chanon thus spake he and seyde
That for the loue of god that for vs al deyde
And as I may deserue it vnto you
What shal this receypte coste tel me now
By ourelady quod this chanon it is dere
I warne you wele that saue I and a freze
In Englund can no man it make
No force quod he now sir for goddes sake
What shal I pay telle me I you pray
I wys quod he it is ful dere I say
Sir at one worde if ye lyst it to haue
ye shalle pay forty ponde so god me saue
And nere the frendship that ye dyd or this

The tale of the chanons yeman

To me sholde ye paye nomoze y wys
This preest the summe of fourty pounde anon
Of nobles fet and toke them euerichoon
To this chanon for his ilke recepte
Alle his workyng was but fraude and discepte
Sir preest he sayd I hepe to haue no losse
Of my crafte for I wol hepe it crosse
And as ye loue me hepe ye it secre
For if men knowe alle my subtelte
By god they wolde haue so grete enuye
To me bicause of my philophye
I sholde be dede ther were none othez wey
God forbede quod the preest what ye say
yet hadde I yuez spende al the gode
Whiche that I haue or elles were I wode
Than that ye shulde falle in suche a myschief
For youre gode wyll sir haue ye right gode preef
Quod this chanon and fare wele graunt mercy
And went his way and neuiz the preest him se
After that day, and whan this preest sholde
Make assay at suche tyme as he wolde
Of this recepte fare wele it wol nat be
So thus beiaped and begyled was he
Thus makith he his introduction
To bryng folke to theire distruction
Considreth sires how that in eche estate
Betwyte men and golde ther is debate
So ferforth that vnnethes is there none
This multipliyng blyndeth so many one
That in gode feyth I trowe thad it be
The cause gretest of suche scarsite
These philosophers speken so mystely
In this crafte that men can nat come therby

The tale of the chanons yeman

For any wytte that men may haue now a daies
They may wele chatern as doon Japes 
And in theire termys settyn their lust and peyn
But to theire purpos shal they neuir atteyn
A man may lightly lerne if he haue ought
To multiply, and bryng his gode to nought
So whiche a lucre is in this worthy game
A manns myrthe it wol turne vnto grame
And empte also grete and heuy purses
And maken folke for to purchase curses
Of them that haue their gode to them lent
O fy for shame tho that haue be Brent
Allas can they nat fle the fyres hete
ye that it vse I rede that ye it lete
Best that ye lese al for bette than neuir is late
Neuir to thryue were to long a date
Though ye prolle euir neuir shal ye it fynde
ye be as bolde as it baperd the blynde
That blundreth forth and paret castith none
He is as bolde to rynne agaynst a stone
As for to go besides in the wey
So fare ye that multiply I sey
If that youre eyen can nat se a right
Loke that youre mynde lache nat his sight
For though that ye loke right brode and stare
ye shal wyne neuir of that chaffare
But waste alle that ye may rappe and renne
Withdraue the fyre lest it to fast Brenne
Medlith no more with that arte I mene
For if ye do your thrifte is gone fulclene
And right as swythe I wyl you telle here
What philosophers dyd in this matere
So thus sayth Arnolde of the newe touer

The tale of the chanoys yeman

As his rosary makith mencion
He sayth right thus withouten any lye
Ther may no man mercury mortefy
But if it be with his brothers knowltyng
Eo how that he whiche first sayd this thyng
Of philosophers fadre was hermes
He sayth how that the dragon doutles
Ne dieth nat but if that he be slayn
With his brothez and that is for to seyn
By the dragon Mercury and none othez
He vnderstondeh and brymstone be his brothez
That oute of sol and luna were y dra we
And therfore sayde he take hede to my sa we
Let no man besy him this arte for to seche
But he the entencion and the speche
Of philosophers vnderstonde can
And if he do he is a lewde man
For this science and this honnyng sayd he
Is of the secrete of secretes parde
Also ther was a disciple of plato
That on a tyme sayde his mayster to
As his boke semoz wolbere wytnes
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnes
Tel me the name of that pryue stone
And plato aunswerde vnto him anone
Take the stone that Thitanes men name
Whiche is that quod he magnacia is the same
Sayde plato ye sir is it thus
This is ignotum per ignocius
What is magnacia gode sir I you pray
It is a water that is made I say
Of elementes foure quod plato
Tel me the rote gode sir quod he tho

The tale of the chanons yeman

Of that water if it be youre wyllle
Nay nay quod plato certeyn that I wyllle
The philosophers were sworne everichone
That they sholde discouer it to none
Ne in no boke it wryte in no manere
For vnto god it is so leef and dere
For he wol nat that it discoueryd be
But where it lyketh to his depte
Man to enspire and eke vnto defende
Whan that him lyketh so this is the ende
Than conclude I thus sithen that god of heuyn
Ne wol nat the philosophers neuyn
How that a man shal come vnto this stone
I rede as for the best let it gone
For who so makith god his aduersary
As for to worke any thyng in contrary
Of his wyllle. neuiz shal he thryue
Though that he multiplie terme of his lyue
And there a poynthe for endydis my tale
God sende euery gode man bote of his bale
Here endith the tale of the chanons yeman



The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

Here betynneth the tale of the doctoure of phisyke

t Her Was as tellith titus liuyus
A knyght that clepyd was virgynus
Fulfilled of honoure and of worthynes
And stronge of frendes and of richesse
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf
fayre was this mayde of excellent beaute
Aboue euery wight that men myght se
froz nature hath with souerayn diligence
froumed her in so grete excellence
As though she wolde say lo I nature
Thus can I fourme and peynre a creature
Whan that me lyst who can me contrefete
Pygmaleon nat though he forge and bete
Dr graue or peynre for I dar wele sayn
Apelles zanzis sholde worche in beyn
To graue or peynre or forge or bete
If they presumed me to countrefete
froz he that is the fourmoure principalle
Hath made me his bycare generalle
To fourme and peynre erthly creatures
Right as me lyst for alle thyng in my cure is
Vndre the mone that may wane and waxe
And for my werke nothyng wol I axe
My lord and I be fully of accorde
I made her to the worshippe of my lord
So do I alle myn other creatures
Of what coloures they be or what figures
Thus semyth me that nature wolde say
This mayde was of tuelue yere age and twey

The tale of the doctoure of phisy

In Whiche that nature had suche deelyte
For right as he can pepnte a lylly white
And rody as a rose with suche pepnture
She pepnted hath this noble creature
Or she was born vpon her lymes fre
Where as by right suche coloures sholde be
And phebus dyde had his dresses grete
Byke to the stremys of his burnyng hete
And if that excellent was her beaute
A thousand folde more vertuou was she
In her ne lackith no condicion
That is to pryse as by discrecion
As wele in body as in goost chaste was she
For whiche she flored in vertynite
With alle humylite and abstyence
With alle atemperaunce and pacience
With mesure eke and beryng of aray
Discrete she was in aunsweryng allwey
She was as wyse as pallas dare I seyn
Her facunde eke ful womanly and pleynt
None countrefetyd termes hadde she
To seme wyse but after her dettre
She spake and alle her wordes more and lesse
Sownyng in vertue and in gentylnesse
Shamefast she was in maydens shamefastnesse
Constant in herte and euir in besynesse
To dryue her oute of ydle slogardye
Bacus hadde of her mouthe no maistrye
For wyne and youthe doth venus encrese
As men in fyre wol cast oyle or grece
And of her owne vertue vncostreynd
She hath ful ofte tymes her seke feynd
For that she wolde fle the company

The tale of the doctoure of phispyke

Where lykely was to treten of foly
As is at festes reuelles and daunces
That been occasions of daliaunces
Suche thynges make children for to be
To sone rype and bolde as men may se
Whiche is ful parlous and hath been yore
For alle to sone may she lerne the lore
Of boldnesse whan she is wexen a wyf
And ye mastresses in youre olde lyf
That lordes doughters haue in gouernaunce
Ne takith of my wordes no displeaunce
Thynke that ye been set in gouernynge
Of lordes doughters only for two thynges
Ether for to haue kept youre honesty
Or elles ye haue fallen in freelte
And knowe wele ynough the olde daunce
And haue forsake fully myschaunce
For euirmore, therfore for cristes sake
To teche them vertue loke that ye nat slake
A theef of benysoun that hath forlast
His licouresnesse and his olde crafte
Can kepe a forest best of any man
Now kepe them wele for and ye wol ye can
Loketh wele to no byce that ye assent
Best ye dampned be for youre euyl entent
For who so doth a traytoure is certayn
And takith hede of that I shalle seyn
Of alle treason souerayn pestilence
Is whan a wight betrayeth innocence
Ye faders and ye moders eke also
Though ye haue children be it one or mo
Your is the charge of alle theire surueyaunce
Whiles they been vndre youre gouernaunce

The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

Beware if by ensamples of your lyuyng
Or by youre negligence in chastysyng
That they ne perysse for I dare wile sey
If that they do ye shal it dere abyey
Vndre a shipherde soft and negligent
The wolf hath many a shepe and lambe to rent
Suffiseth ensamples ynough as here
For I must turne ayen to my matere
This mayde of which I telle expresse
She kept her self she nedyd no maystresse
For in her lyuyng maydens myght rede
As in a boke euery gode word in dede
That longith to a mayde vertuous
She was so prudent and so bounteous
For whiche the fame oute sprong on euery syde
Bothe of her bounte and of her beaute wyde
That through the londe they pryse her echone
That loued vertue saue enuy alone
That soz is of othez mennys wele
And glade is of his sorowe and vnbele
This doctoure makith this descripcioun
This mayde on a day went to the toune
Towarde the temple with her modre dere
As is of yong maydens the manere
Now was there a iustice in the toune
That gouernoure was of that regioun
And so besyl this iutte his eyen cast
Vpon this mayde auy syng her ful fast
As she cam forth by there the iutte stode
Anone his herte chaunged and his mode
So was he caught with beaute of this mayde
And to him self ful pryuelly he sayde
This mayde shalbe myn for any man

The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

Anone the feende into his herte ran
And taughte him sodenly by what slight
The mayden to his purpos wyne he myght
For certis by no force ne by no mede
Him thoughte he was nat able for to spede
For she was stronge of frendes and eke she
Confermyd was in suche souerayn beaute
That wele he wylt he myght her nat wyne
As for to make her with her body to synne
For whiche with grete deliberacioun
He sent after a chorle was in the town
The whiche he knewe ful subtil and ful bolde
This iuge vnto this chorle his tale hath tolde
In secrete wyse and made him to assure
He sholde telle it to no creature
And if he dyd he sholde lese his hede
Whan assentyd was this cursed dede
Glade was the iuge and made glade there
And gaue him yestes precious and dere
Whan shapen was al this conspiracy
From poynte to poynte how that his lychery
Parfourmed shold be ful subtilly
As ye shalle here it after alle openly
Some goth this chorle that hight claudyus
This false iuge that hight Appius
So was his name for it is no fable
But knowen for an historpal thyng notable
The sentence of it soth is oute of doute
This false iuge goth now fast aboute
To hasten his delyte alle that he may
And so befyl sone after on a day
This false iuge as tellith vs the story
As he was wont sat in his consistory

The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

And paue his domes vpon sondry caas
This false chorle cam forth a ful grete paas
And sayd lord if it be youre Wylle
As doth me right vpon my pytous bylle
In whiche I pleyne vpon virginus
And if he wol say it is nat thus
I Wyl preue it and fynde gode Wytnesse
That soth is that my bylle wol expresse
The iutte aunswerd of this in his absence
I may nat yeue diffynpte sentence
Lette do calle him and I wol gladly here
Thou shalt haue right and no wrong here
Virginus cam to here the iustice Wylle
And right anone was redde this cursed bylle
The sentence was therof as ye shal here
To you my lord Appyus so dere
She with youre poure seruaunt Claudius
How that a knyght callyd virginus
Apenst the la we and apenst alle equyte
Holdith expresse apenst the Wyl of me
My seruaunt. whiche that is my thralle by right
Whiche from myn house was stolen on a nyght
Whiles she was fulle yong I wol it preue
By Wytnes lord so that ye nat greue
She nys nat his doughter what so he say
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray
yelde me my thralle if it be youre Wylle
So this was alle the sentence of this bylle
Virginus gan vpon the chorle beholde
But hastely or he his tale tolde
He wolde a defendyd it as sholde a knyght
And by Wytnesse of many a trewe wight
That alle was false that sayd his aduersary

The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

This cursed iuge wolde no lenger tary
Ne here a worde more of birgynus
But paue his iugement and sayde thus
I deme anone this chorle his seruant haue
Thou shalt no lenger in thy house her saue
Go fette her forth and put her in oure warde
This chorle shall haue his thralle thus I a warde
And whan this worthy knyght birgynus
Through sentence of the iuge Appius
Must by force his dere doughter yeurn
Vnto the iuge in lychery to lyuen
He goth him home and set him in his halle
And lete anone his dere doughter calle
And with a face ded as asshes colde
Vpon her humble face he gan beholde
With faders pyte styckynge through his herte
Al wol he nat from his purpos conuerte
Doughter quod he birginea by the name
Ther been two weyes othez deth or shame
That thou must suffre allas that I was bore
For neuir thou deseruyt wherfore
Todye with a swerde or with a knyf
O dere doughter whiche that alle my lyf
I haue fostryd by with suche plesaunce
That thou ne were oute of my remembraunce
O doughter whiche that my last wo
And in my lyf my last ioy also
O gemme of chastite in pacience
Take thou thy deth for this is my sentence
For loue and nat for hate thou must be dede
My pytous honde must smyte of thy hede
Allas that euir Appius the sey
Thus hath he iuged the to day

The tale of the doctoure of phisike

And tolde her al the cas as ye bifoze
Haue herd it nedith to telle it no moze
O mercy dere fadre quod the mayde
And with that worde she bothe her armes leyd
Aboute his necke as she was wont to do
The terps brast out of her eyen two
And sayd gode fadre shal I dye
Is ther no grace is ther no remedy
May certis dere doughter myn quod he
Than yeue me leue fader myn quod she
My deth to compleyne a lytel space
Ffor parde Jeyte paue his doughter grace
Ffor to compleyne oz he her slow allas
And god it wote nothyng was her trespas
But that she ray her faderz for to se
To welcome him with grete solempnite
And with that worde she fyl a swoune anoon
And after whan her swounyng was agone
She ryseth vp and to her faderz sayde
Blyssed be god that I shalle dye a mayde
yet me my deth oz that I haue a shame
Doth with youre childe youre wylle a goddes name
And with that word she prayeth ful ofte
That with his swerde he sholde smyte softe
And with that worde a swoun doune she fyl
Her fader with a soroufulle herte and wylle
Her hede of smote and by the top it hent
And to the iuge he paue it in present
As he sat yet in dome in in consistory
Whan that the iuge it saue as sayth the stozp
He badde take him and hantge him also fast
But right anone alle the people in thraste
To saue the knyght for routhe and for pyte
hh im

The tale of the doctoure of phisike

For knowen was the fals iniquyte
The people anon hadde suspecte in this thyng
By maner of this chorles chalentyng
That it was by assent of Appius
They wpst wele that he was lecherous
Forthwith vnto this appius they gone
And cast him in pryson and that anone
Where as he slow him self and claudyus
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius
Was dempd for to be hanged vpon a tre
But birgynups of his grete pyte
So prayed for him that he was exiled
And elles certis hadde he be begyled
The remenaunt were honged both more and lesse
That consentyd were to this cursednesse
Here may ye se how synne hath his meryte
Be ware for no man wote how god wol smyte
In no degre ne in no maner wyse
The worne of conscience may ynough agtryse
Of wyched lyf though it so pryue be
That no man wote of but god and he
Whether that he be lewde man or leryd
He noot how sone he may be aferyd
Therefore I rede you this counceyl take
For sake synne or synne you forsake

Here endith the phisiciens tale
And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

O Dre hoost gan swere as he were wode
Harow quod he by nayles and by blode
This was a fals theef a cursed iustyse
As shamefulle deth as herte can deuyse

The prologue of the Pardoner

Come to thise fals iuges and theire aduocates
Allas this sely mayde is slayn allas
Allas to dere aboughte she her beaute
Wherfore I say that alle men may se
That pestes of fortune and of nature
Been cause of deth of many a creature
Her beaute was her deth I dar wele seyn
Allas so pytously as she was slayn
But herof wol I nat procede as now
Men haue ful ofte more harme than prow
But truly myn owne mayster dere
This is a pytous tale for to here
But menirthelesse passe ouir is no force
I pray to god so saue thy gentyl corps
And thy brynales and thy iourdeyns
Thyn ypocras and eke thy galiens
And euery boyst fulle of lectuary
God blisse them al and oure lady seint mary
So moot I the thou art a proppz man
And lyke a prelate by seint danyan
Thou hast spoke ynough I can nat sey in terme
But wele I wote thou makyst my herte toerne
That I almoost haue caught a cardyacle
By corpus dominus but if I haue tryacle
Or elles a draughte of corny moysty ale
Or but I here anon a mery tale
My herte is lost for pyte of this mayde
Thou belamy thou John pardonere he sayd
Tel vs som myrthes or iapes right anoon
It shalbe do he sayde by seint Runyon
But first quod he here at this ale stake
I wol bothe drynke and ete of a cake
But right anoon these gentylles began to cry

The prologue of the Pardoner

May let him telle vs of no rebaudrye
Tel vs som moralle thyng that we may lere
Som wyt and than wol we gladly here
I graunte ywys quod he but I must thynke
Vpon som honest thyng whyles that I drynke

Here endith the wordes of the hoost
And begynneth the pardoners prologue

I Ordynge's quod he in chirche whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an haunten speche
And ryng it oute as rounde as goth a belle
For I can by rote alle that I telle
My teme is euir one and alwey was
hadij omnium malorum est cupiditas
First I pronounce whens that I come
And than my bylles shewe I alle and some
Dure liege lordes seale on my patent
That shewe I first my body to warrent
That no man be so bolde ne preest ne clerke
Me to distroube of cristes holy werke
And after that telle I forth my tales
Bulles of popes and cardynales
Of patriarkes and bysshoppes I shewe
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe
To saffron with my predicacioun
And for to stere men to deuocioun
Thenne shewe I forth my long cristalle stones
Y crammed in cloutes fulle of bones
Kelykes they been as wene they echone
Than haue I in laton a sholder bone
Whiche that was of an holy iewys shepe
Gode men say I take of my wordes kepe

The prologue of the Pardonere

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle
If how or calf shepe or ox swelle
That any worme hath ete or him stong
Take water of this welle and wasshe his tonge
And it is hole anone. and ferthermore
Of pokes and of scabbes and euery soze
Shalle euery shepe be hole that of this welle
Drynketh a draught take kepe of that I telle
If that the gode man that the bestes owyth
Wol euery weke or that the cok crowyth
Fastyng drynke of this welle a draughte
As that holy Ieue oure elders taughte
His bestes and his store shal multiply
And sires also it helyth ielousye
And though a man be fallen in ielous rage
Let make with this water his potage
And neuir shal he more his wyf mystryste
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyf
Al hadde she take prestys two or thre
Here is a metayne eke that ye may se
He that his honde wol put in this meteyn
He shal haue multiplyng of his grayn
Whan he hath sowen be it whete or otyes
So that he offre pens oz elles grotys
Gode men and women one thyng warne I you
If any wyght be in the chirche now
That hath done synne so orrible that he
Dar nat for shame shryuen be
Or any woman be she yong or olde
That hath y made her husbonde cokeolde
Suche folke shalle haue no powez ne grace
To offre to my relyphes in this place
And who so fyndeth them oute of suche blame

The prologue of the Pardoner

Comyth by and offre in goddes name
And I assople them by the auctorite
Suche as by bulle was graunted to me
By this gaude haue I wonne many a yere
An hundred marke sithen I was pardonere
I stonde byke a clerke in my pulpet
And whan lewde people be down y set
I preche so as ye haue herd bifore
And telle an hundred false iapes more
Than payne I me to stretche forth my necke
And est and west vpon the people I becke
As doth a doue syttyng vpon a berne
My hondes and my tonge goth so yerne
That it is ioye to se my besynesse
Of auarice and of suche cursydnesse
Is alle my prechyng to make them fre
To peue their pens and namely vnto me
For myn entent is nat but for to wyne
And nothyng for correctioun of synne
I reche nat whan that they be beryed
Though their soules gone a blake beried
For certis fulle many a predicacioun
Som wyth ofte tyme of euyl entencioun
Som for plefaunce of folke and for flattery
To been anaunsed by ypocrysy
And som for beyne glozpe and som for hate
For whan I dare not othez weyrs debate
Than wol styng them with my tong smert
In prechyng so that they shalle nat astert
To be diffamed falsely if that he
Hath trespaced othez to my brethern or to me
For though I telle nat his propre name
Men shalke wele knowe that it is the same

The prologue of the Pardonere

By synes or by other circumstaunces
Thus quyte I folke that doth vs displeasaunces
Thus spytte I oute my benygn hndre he We
Of holynesse to seme holy and trewe
But shortly myn entent I wol deuyse
I preche of no thyng but of couetyse
Therfore my teame is and euir was
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas
Thus gan I preche the same byce
To suche as be vsyng the synne of auarice
But though my self be gilty in that synne
yet can I make other folke to t wynne
From auarice, and soze them to repente
But that is nat my pryncipalle entente
I preche no thyng but for couetyse
Of this matere it ough t ynough suffise
Than telle I them en samples many oon
Of olde stozys long tyme agoon
For lewde people loue tales olde
Whiche thynges can they wele reporte and holde
What trow ye whiles that I may preche
And for to wynne golde and syluer for to teche
That I wol lyue in pouert wylfully
Nay nay I neuir thoughte it truly
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes
I wyl nat do no laboure with myn hondes
Ne make baskettes and lyue therby
Bicause I wolle nat begge ydelly
I wolle none of the apposteles countrefete
I wol haue money, wole chese and whete
Alke were it yeu en of the pourest patte
Or of the pourest wydowe in a byllatte
Al sholde her children sterue for famyn

The prologue of the Pardonez

May I wol drynke the licoure of the Wyn
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
But herk neth lordynges in conclusioun
poure lphynng is that I must telle a tale
Now I haue dronke a draughte of corny ale
By god I hope I shalle tel you a thynng
That shalle by reason be at poure lphynng
ffor though my self be a ful byciouse man
A moralle tale yet I you telle can
Whiche I am wont for to preche and also Wynne
Now holde poure peas my tale I wol begynne

Here endith the pardoners prologue
And begynneth his tale



i In flaunders somtyme was a company
Of yong folke that hauntedyn foly
As ryotte hazarde steWys and tauernys

The tale of the Pardoner

The Pardoner's Tale

Where as with harpes lutes and gyternes
They daunce and pley at the dyce both day & nyght
And etyn also and drynken aboue their myght
Thruogh whiche they done the deuyl sacrifice
Within the deuylles temple in cursed wyse
The superfluytees abhomytable
Theire othes be so grete and so dampnable
That it is grypsely for to here them swere
Dure blyssed lordes body they to tere
Them thought the iewys rent him nat ynough
And eche of them at others synne lough
And right anone cam in the tomblesterys
Fetys and smale and pong frutesterys
Syngers with harpes baldes wafreyes
Suche as been berzy the deuylles officerys
To kyndel and blowe the fyres of lychery
That is anneyed vnto glotony
The holy wryte take I to wytnesse
That lychery is in wyne and in dronknesse
Lo how that dronkyn loth vnkyndeley
Lay by his daughters two vnkynngly
So dronke he was he nyst what he wrought
And therfore soze repente him ougth
Herodis who so wyl the storpes seche
There may ye lerne and by ensample teche
Whan he of wyne was replete at the fest
Right at his owne table gaue his heest
To sle the baptyst John ful gyltes
Seneke sayth eke gode wordes doutles
He sayth he can no difference fynde
Betwix a man that is oute of his mynde
And a man whiche that is dronke we
But that wodenes fallen in a shre we

The tale of the Pardoner

Perseuereth lenger than doth dronknesse
Dute glotony ful of cursednesse
D cause first of oure confusioun
D origynalle synne of oure dampnacioun
Tyl criste hadde bought vs with his blode attayn
So how dere shortly for to seyn
A bought was this cursed belony
Corrupte was al this worlde through glotony
Adam oure forn fadre and his wyf also
fro paradise to laboure and to wo
were dreyn for that byce it is no drede
for whiles that Adam fastyd as I rede
He was in paradise and whan that he
ete of the frute defended on the tre
Anone he was oute cast to woo and peyne
D glotony on the oughit vs wele to pleyne
D wylt a man how many maledies
fro we of excesse and of glotonyes
He sholde be the more mesurable
D of his dyette syttyng at his table
Alas the shorte throte the tendre mouthe
makith that est and west north and southe
In erthe in eyre in water men to swynke
To gete a gloton deynste mete and drynke
D poule of this matere wele canst thou entrete
mete vnto wombe and wombe eke vnto mete
Shal god distroye bothe as poule seyth
Alas a foule thyng it is by seyth
To say this worde and fouler is the dede
whan men so drynke of the whyte and rede
That of his throte he makith his pryue
Through that cursed superfluyte
The appostel wepyng sayth ful pytously

Handwritten marginal note in a cursive script, likely a commentary or correction. The text is difficult to decipher but appears to discuss the nature of gluttony and its effects.

The tale of the Pardonere

Ther Walkyn many of whiche you tolde haue I
I say it now wepyng with pytous voyce
That they been enymeys of cristes croyce
Of whiche the ende is deth wombe is their god
O wombe o bely o stynkyng cod
Fulfylled of donge and of corrupcioun
At eyther ende of the foule is the soun
How grete cost and laboure is the to fynde
These cokes. how they stampe streyne and grynde
And turne substaunce into accident
To fulfyll alle thy lycorous talent
Wute of the harde bones knoken they
The mary for they cast naught a wey
That may go through the golet soft and sote
Of spicery of leuys barke and rote
Shal be his sause y made by delyte
To make him yet a newe appetyte
But certes he that haunteth suche delices
Is dede whiles that he lyueth in the byces
Alycherous thyng is wyne. and dronknes
Is ful of stryuyng and of wrechidnes
O dronken man disfigured in thy face
Soure is thy brethe foule art thou to embrace
And through thy dronken nose sowneth thy soun
As though thou saydest ay sampson sampson
And yet god wote sampson dranke neuir no wyne
Thou falsyst as it were a styched swyne
Thy tong islost and alle thy honest cure
For dronknesse is berzy sepulture
Of manny's wytte and his discrecioun
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He can no counseyl kepe it is no drede
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rede

The tale of the Pardoner

Namely fro the Whyte Wyne of lepe
That is to selle in Brydte strete or in chepe
This Wyne of spayne crepith subtelly
In othez Wynes growyng fast by
Of whiche ther riseth iuche fumosite
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre
And wenyth that he be at home in chepe
He is in spayne right at the toune of lepe
Nat at rochel ne at burdeuy toune
And than wol he say sampson sampson
But herkne the lordynges one worde þou pray
That alle the souerayne actes dar þou say
Of victoryes in the olde testament
Throughe verry god that is omnipotent
Were doon in abstinence and in praye
Lokith the byble and there ye may it lere
Lokith Attylla the grete conqueroure
Dyed in his slepe with shame and dishonoure
Bledyng ay at his nose in dronknesse
A capdeyne sholdelyue in sobirnesse
And our alie this auyse þou right wele
What was comaunded vnto lamuele
Nat samuel but lamuel say þou
Redith the byble and fynde it expressely
Of wyne yeuyng to them that haue iustice
Nomore of this for it may suffice
a Now now that I haue spoke of glotony
Now wol I defende þou hasardry
Hasardry is verry modre of lesyntes
And of disceyte and cursed swerynges
Blasphemye of criste manslaughtez and waste also
Of catel and of tyme and ferthermo
It is reпреef and contrary of honoure

The tale of the Pardonere

Foz to be holden a comon hasardoure
And euir the higher that he is in estate
The more he is holden desolate
If that a prynce vse hasardry
In alle gouernaunce and alle policie
He is as by comon opunyon
y holde the lasse in reputacioun
Stylbone that was holde a wyse enbassedoure
Was sent into corynthe with grete honoure
fro calidon to make them alliaunce
And whan he cam him happyd this chaunce
That alle the gretest that were of that londe
Pleyng at the hasard he them fonde
Foz whiche as sone as that it myght be
He stak him home ayen to his countre
And sayde there wyl I nat lese my name
I wol nat take on me so grete defame
you foz allye to none hasardours
Sendith othez wyse enbassadours
Foz by my trouthe me were lyuer dye
Than I you to hasardours sholde allye
Foz ye that been so glorious in honoures
Shalle nat alye you to no hasardours
As by my wylle ne as by my trette
To this wyse philosophes thus sayd he
Loke eke thou to the kyng demetryus
The kyng of parthes as the boke sayth vs
Send him a peyre of dyce of golde in scozne
Foz he hadde used hasarde ther biforen
Foz whiche he helde his glozy and his reuoun
At no balue oz reputacioun
Lordes myght fynde othermanez pley
Honest ynough to dryue the day a wey

The tale of the Pardoner

n **W**ol I speke of othes false and grete
A worde or two as many bokes trete
Grete sweryng is a thyng abhomyuable
And false sweryng is a thyng more reprovuble
The hight god forbade sweryng at alle
Wytnesse of Mathew but in specialle
Of sweryng sayth holy Jeromy
Thou shalt swere soth thy othes and nat lye
But swere in dome and in right wysnesse
But ydel sweryng is a cursydnesse
Behorde and se that in the first table
Of the hight goddes heest is honourable
How that the seconde heest of him is this
Take nat my name in ydelnesse amys
So rather he forbedith suche sweryng
Than homycide or any othez cursed thyng
I say as by ordre thus it stondith
This knowe they that his heestys vnderstondeth
How that the seconde heest of god is that
And ferthermore I wol the telle at plat
That vengeance shalle nat parte from the house
That of his othes is to outrageous
By by goddes precious hert and his nayles
And by the blode of criste that in hayles
Seuyn is my chaunce and thyng is synke and trey
By goddes armes if thou falsly pley
This daggaz shalle through thyng herte go
This fruyte comyth of the beched bones two
For sweryng ire falsnesse and homycide
Now for the loue of criste that for vs deyde
Letyth poure othes bothe grete and smale
For cristes sake and herkne my tale
These rypottoures thre of whiche I telle

The tale of the Pardonere

Rong or to pryne Were rong any belle
Were set them in a tauerne to drynke
And as they sat they herd a belle clynke
Bifore a cozs Were caried to his graue
That one of them gan calle to his knaue
Go bet quod he and aye redily
What corps is this that passeth forth hye
And loke that thou reporte his name wele
Sir quod the boy it nedith neuir a dele
It was me tolde or ye cam here t wo oures
He was parde an olde felowe of youres
Al sodenly was he slayn to nyght
Foz dronke as he sat on his benche bpryght
Ther cam a pryuy thief men clepe deth
That in this countre alle the people sletth
And with his spere he smote his herte at wo
And went his wey withoute wordes moo
He hath a thousand sleyn this pestilence
And mayster or ye come in his pre sence
Me thynketh it were necessary
Foz to be ware of suche an aduersary
Deth is redy for to mete him euir moze
Thus taught me my dame I say no moze
A seint mary sayd this tauerne
The childe sayth soth for he hath this yere
Hens ouir a myle sleyn in a grete byllage
Bothe man and woman childe hyne and pagge
I trowe his habitacioun be there
To be auy sed grete wysdome it were
Or that he dyd a man a dishonoure
ye goddes armes sayde this ryottoure
Is it suche peryl with him for to mete
I shaile him seke by wey and eke by strete

The tale of the Pardoner

I shalle him sle by goddes digne bones
Herhyr felowes we be thre alle onys
Let eche of vs become others brothez
And eche of vs holde by his honde to other
And we wol sle this traytoure deth
He shal be slayn he that so many sleth
By goddes dignyte or it be nyght
To gydder haue these thre their trouthes plight
To lye and by eche of them with other
As though he were his owne borne brothez
And by they stert alle dronke in this rage
And forth they gone toward that byllage
Of whiche the tauernez hath spoke biforn
And many a grysly othe haue they sworn
And cristes blissed body they tozent
Deth shalbe ded if that he may be hent
Whan they haue goon nat fully a myle
Right as they wolde haue gone ouir a style
An olde man and a poure with them mette
This olde man ful mekely them grette
And sayd thus lordynges god you se
The proudest of these riotoures thre
Answerd what chorle with harde grace
Why art thou alle forwrapped saue thy face
Why lyuest thou so long in so grete age
This olde man gan loke in their bysage
And sayde thus for I can nat fynde
A man though I walke into ynde
Neyther in cyte ne in byllage
That wol chaunge his youthe for myn age
And therfore must I haue myn age styll
As long tyme as it is goddes wyll
Ne deth allas wol nat haue my lyf

The tale of the Pardonere

Thus walke I lye a restles captyf
And on the grounde whiche is my moders gate
I knoke with my staf erly and late
And say to her leue modre let me in
Lo how I banysse flesshe blode and shyn
Allas whan shalle my bones be at rest
Moder with you wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambrelong tyme hath be
ye for an heize cloute to wrappe in me
But yet to me ye wol nat do that grace
for whiche ful pale and wrechyd is my fac
And sires to you it is no curtesy
To speke to an olde man belony
But he trespace other in worde or dede
ye may youre self in holy wryte rede
Apenst an olde man hore vpon his hede
ye sholde aryse wherfore I you rede
Ne doth to none olde man hazme now
Nomore than ye wolde men dyd to you
In age if ye sholde longe abyde
And god be with you where ye go or ryde
I must go thider as I haue to do
May olde chorle by god thou shalt nat so
Sayde this othez hasardoure anoon
Thou partest nat so lyghtly by seint John
Thou spakest right now of that traytoure dethe
That in this countre alle oure frendes sleth
Haue here my trouthe thou arte his a spy
Tel where he is or thou shalt it aby
By god and by the holy sacrement
For shortly thou arte one of his assent
To sle vs yong folke thou fals theef
Now sires quod he if it be your leef

The tale of the Pardoner

To fynde deth turne by this croked wey
For in this groue I him sa we last by my fey
Vndre a tre and there he wol abyde
For youre boost he wol no thyng him hyde
Se ye that oke right there ye shal him fynde
God saue you that boughte agayn mankynde
And you amende thus sayd this olde man
And euery of these ryottoures ran
Tyl they came to the tre and there they fonde
Of floreyns fyne golde y coynded rounde
Wele yght an eyght busselles as them thought
No lenger than after deth they soughte
But eche of them so glade was of that sight
For that the floreyns so faire were and bright
That they sat by the precious horde
The worst of them he spake the first worde
Brethern quod he take kepe what I say
My wytte is grete though that I bourd and pley
This tresoure hath fortune bnto vs yeven
In myrthe and iolite oure lyf to lyuen
And lyghtly as it comyth so wol we spende
By goddes precious dignite who wende
To day that we shold haue so fayre a grace
But myght this golde be caried fro this place
Home to my house and elles bnto poures
Than myght we say that it were al oures
Than were we in high felicite
But truly by day it may nat be
Men wolde say that we were theyps strong
And for oure owne tresoure doon vs hong
This tresoure must be caried by nyght
As wysely and as skilly as it myght
Wherfore I rede let loke amonges vs alle

The tale of the Pardonere

Drawe cutte let se Where that it wol falle
He that hath the shortest cutte With hert blythe
Shal renne to toun and that fulle swythe
To brynge vs brede and wyne fulle pryuelly
And two of vs shalle kepe fulle subtelly
This tresoure wele and if he wol nat tary
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresour cary
By one assent where as vs lyst best
That one of them brought strawe in his fist
And bad them drawe and loke whom on it wold fal
And it felle on the yongest of them alle
And forth towarde the toun he went anon
And also sone as he was goon
That one of them spake thus vnto that othez
Thou wotest wele thou art my sworn Brothez
Thy proufyt wol I take the right anon
Thou wost wele that oure felawe is goon
And here is golde and that ful hrete plente
That shalbe departed amonges vs thre
But natheles if I can shape it so
That it departed were amonges vs two
Hadde I nat doon a frendes turne to the
That othez answerd I not how it myght be
I wote wele the golde shalbe oures two
What shal we say what shalle we do
Shalle it be counceyle sayd the first shrewe
And I shal tel the in wordes fewe
What we shalle do and brynge it wele aboute
I graunte quod that othez oute of doute
That by my trouthe I wol the nat be wrey
Now quod he thou wotest wele we be twey
And tweyne of vs shal strengez be than one
Loke whan that he is set thou right anone

The tale of the Pardoner

Arise as though thou woldest with him pley
And I shalle him ryue through the sydes twey
Whiles thou strottelest with him in game
And with thy daggez loke thou do the same
Than shalle alle this golde departed be
My dere frende betwixte me and the
Than may we bothe oure lustes fulfyll
And pley at the dyce right at oure owne wyll
And thus accorded be these shrewys twey
To slep the thridde as ye haue herd me say
This yongest whiche that went to the toun
Fulle ofte in hert he rollith by and down
The beaute of these flozeyns newe and bright
O lord quod he if so were that I myght
Al this tresoure wyne to my self allone
Ther nys no man that lyueth vndre trone
O f god that sholdelyue as mery as I
And at the last the feende oure enemy
Put in his herte that he sholde popson be
With whiche he myght sle his felawes twey
For why the fend fonde him in suchelyuynge
That he hadde leue him in sorowe to bryng
For this was vtterly his entent
To sle them bothe and neuer to repent
And forth he goth ne lenger wolde he tary
Into the toun vnto an apotecary
And prayed him that he wolde him selle
Som popson that he myght his rattes quelle
And eke therwith was a polcat in his haue
That as he sayd his capones hadde y slaue
And sayde he wolde wreke him if he myght
O f vermy that dristroyed him by nyght
The apotecary aunswerd thou shalt haue

The tale of the Pardonere

A thyng as wysely god my soule saue
In alle this worlde ther is no creature
That ete and drynke of this confectione
Nat but the mounテナunce of a corne of whete
That he ne shal anoon his lyf forlete
ye sterue he shalle and that in lasse whete
Or thou wylt go passyng half a myle
This popson is so strong and so byolent
This cursed man hath in his herte it hent
This popson in a bove and sithen he ran
Into the nexte strete vnto a man
And borowed him large botelles thre
And into the tweyn the popson poured he
The thridde he hepte cleene for his drynke
For al nyghte he shope him for to swynke
In carryng of this golde oute of this place
And whan this rrottoure with sozry grace
Hadde fylled with wyne his grete botelles thre
To his felawes ayeu repayreth he
What nedith it to sermone of it more
For right as they hadde cast his deth afore
Right so they haue him sleyn right anoon
And whan this was done than spake that one
Now let vs sytte and drynke and make vs mery
And afterwarde we wol his body bery
And afterwarde it happyd them per caas
To take the botel there the popson was
And draunke and yaued his felawe drynke also
For whiche anone they steruyng bothe two
But certis I suppose that Auicene
Wrote neuiz in no canoun ne in no fenne
More wondre sorowes of enpopsonyng
Than hadde these wrechis two in theire endyng

The tale of the Pardoner

Thus endyd been these homycides tuo
And eke the false enpoysoner also
O cursed syn fulle of cursidnesse
O traytoures homycide o Wychednesse
O glotony oluxury o hasardry
Thou blasphemez of crist With belony
And othes grete of vsage and of pryde
Alas mankynde how may it betyde
That to thy creatour Whiche that the wrought
And with his precious blode the bought
Thou art so false and so bukynde alas
Now gode men god foryeue you your trespas
And ware you from the synne of auarice
My holy pardoun may you alle warice
So that ye offre nobles oz sterlynges
Dor elles siluez spones broches oz rynces
Bowith youre hede bndre these holy bulles
Comyth bp ye wyues offreth of youre wolles
your names I entre in my rolle anoon
Into the blisse of heuyn shalle ye goon
I you assoyle by my high powez
you that wol offre as clene and as clere
As ye were bore to fires thus I preche
And Jesu crist that is oure soules leche
So graunte you his pardoun to resceyue
For that is best I wol you nat deceyue
But sires o worde forgate I in my tale
I haue relyphes and pardoun in my male
As fayre as any man in englonde
Whiche were me yeue by the popes honde
If any of you wol of deuocoun
Offre and haue myn absolucoun
Comyth forth anoon and knelith here adoun

The tale of the Pardonere

And mehely receyuethe youre pardon
Or elles takith pardon as ye wende
Alle newe and fresshe at euery myles end
So that ye offre alwey newe and newe
Nobles or pens whiche that been gode and trewe
It is an honoure to eueriche that is here
That ye may haue a sufficient pardonere
To assople you in countre as ye ryde
Foz auentures whiche that may betyde
Foz parauenture ther may falle one or two
Doun of his horse and breke his necke a two
Loke whiche a surete it is to you alle
That I am in youre felausship y falle
That may assople you bothe more and lasse
Whan that the soule shalle from the body passe
I rede that oure hoost here shalle begynne
Foz he is moost enuoluped in synne
Come forth sir hoost and offreth here anone
And thou shalt kysse the relyches euerichone
ye for a grote vnbocke anone thy purse
May nay quod he than haue I cristes curse
Let be quod he it shal nat be so theche
Thou woldest make me to kysse thyn olde breche
And swere it were a relyke of a seint
Though it were with thy fundament y peynte
But by that croce whiche that seint eleyh fonde
I wolde I hadde thy colyons in myn honde
In stede of relyches ether of seynthe wary
Let cutte them of I wol helpe the them to cary
They shal be shryned in an hotttes tozd
This pardonere aunswerd nat a word
So wroth he was he wolde no worde say
Now quod oure hoost I wol no lenger pley

The tale of the Pardoner

With the ne With none othez angry man
But right anone the worthy knyght began
Whan that he sawe that alle the people lough
No more of this for this is right ynough
Sir pardonez be mery and glade of chere
And ye sir hoost that be to me so dere
I pray you that ye kyssse the pardonere
And pardonez I pray the dra we the nere
And as we dyd let bslaughte and pley
Anone they kyssed and ryden forth thire wey

Here endith the Pardoners tale
And begynneth the shipmannes tale



a Marchaunte somtyme Was at seint Denys
That riche was therfore men helde him wyse
A wyf he hadde of excellent beaute
And compenable and reuelous was she

The tale of the Shypman

Whiche is a thyng that causeth more dispence
Than worth is alle the chere and reuerence
That men them doon at festes and at daunces
Suche salutaciouns and countenaunces
Passen as doth a shadowe on a walle
But wo is him that pay must hoz alle
The sely husbond algate he must paye
He must vs bothe clothe and eke arzay
Alle for his owne worshop fülle richely
In whiche arzay we daunse iolily
And if that he nought pay parauenture
Or elles lyst nat suche spences endure
But thynketh it is wastyd and y lost
Than must a nother pay for oure cost
Orlene vs golde and that is parlous
This noble marchaunt helde a noble house
For whiche he hadde so grete repeyre
For his largenes and for his wyf was fayre
That wondre was but herkneþ to my tale
Amonge alle these gestes gret and smale
Ther was a monke a fayre man and a bolde
I trowe that threty wynter he was olde
That euir in one was drawyng to that place
This yong monke that was so fayre of face
Aqueynted was so with the gode man
Sithen that their first knowlette began
That in his house as famplier was he
As it is possible any frende to be
But forasmuche as this gode man
And eke this monke of whiche I began
Were bothe two born in one byllatte
The monke him claymeth as for cosynatte
And he ayen sayth nat onys nay

The prologue of the Shypman

But was as glade therof as foule of day
For to his herte it was a grette pleasure
Thus been they knyghte with etern alliaunce
And eche of them gan other for to ensure
Of brotherhede while that their lyf may dure
Fre was dan John and namely of dispence
As in that house and fulle of dilygence
To doon pleasure and also grette costage
He nat forgate to geue the lest paye
In alle that house but after his degre
He paye the lord and also his menye
Whan that he cam som maner honest thyng
For whiche they were as glade of his comyng
As foule is fayn when the sonne by riseth
Nomore of this for it suffiseth
But so befyl this marchaunte on a day
Shope him to make redy his aray
Toward the toune of Bruges for to fare
To by there a porcioun of Ware
For whiche he hadde to parys sent anon
A messangere and prayed hath dan John
That he sholde come to seint denys and pley
With him and his wyf a day or twey
Or he to Bruges went and alle wyse
This noble monke the whiche I you deuise
Hath of his abbot as him lyst licence
Bicause he was a man of high prudence
And eke an officere oute for to ryde
To se their graunges and their bernys wyde
And to seint denys comyth him anone
Who was so welcome as my lord dan John
Dure dere cosyn fulle of curtesy
With him he broughte a Jub of maluesy

The tale of the Shypman

And eke another fulle of fyne Bernatte
And volatyle as was his vsage
And thus Jlete them ete drynke and pley
This marchaunt and this monke a day or twey
The thridde day the marchaunte vp riseth
And on his nedys sadly him auyseth
And by to his counterhouse goth he
To rekne with him self wele may be
Of that yere how that it with him stode
And how that he dispendyd had his gode
And if encresyd he hadde or noon
His bokes and his bagges many one
He leyeth biforn him on his countynng borde
Fulle ryche was his tresoure and his horde
For whiche fulle faste his countre he shitte
And eke he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountynng for the meame tyme
And thus he sat tyl it was passed pryme
Dan John was rysen in the morowe also
And in the gardyn walked to and fro
And sayd his thynges ful coriously
This gode wyf cam walkynng pryuesly
Into the gardeyn there as he walked soft
And him salued as she hath doon ofte
A mayde childe cam in her company
Whiche as she lyst she may gouerne and tye
For yet vndre the perde was the mayde
O dere cosyn myn dan John she sayd
What ayleth you so rathe for to ryse
Nece quod he it ough t ynough suffise
Fyue oures to slepe on a nyght
But it were for an olde palled wight
As been these weddyd men that lye and dare

The tale of the Shypman

As in a fouzme sytteth a berzy hare
Were alle forstraught With houndes grete and smale
But dere nece Why loke ye now so pale
I trowe certis that oure gode man
Hath you laboured sithen the nyght began
That you were nede to reste hastely
And with that worde she lough fulle merely
And with her owne thought weyt alle rede
This fayre wyf gan shake her hede
And sayd thus ye god wote alle quod she
May cosyn it stondith nat so with me
For by that god that gaue me soule and lyf
In alle the reame of fraunce is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sorp pley
For I may syng allas and wel a wey
That I was born but to no wight quod she
Dar I nat telle how it stondith with me
Wherfore I thynke oute of this londe to wende
Or elles of my self to make an ende
So fulle I am of drede and eke of care
This monke began vpon this wyf to stare
And sayd allas my nece god forbede
That ye for any sorowe or for any drede
Fordo youre self but telle me your greef
Paraventure I may in youre myschief
Counceyl or helpe and therfore tellith me
Alle youre annoye for it shalle secret be
For on my portiose here I make an othe
That neuir in my lyf for leef ne loth
Ne shal I of uo counseyl you be wrey
The same quod she to you I say
By god and by this portiose I you swere
Though men wol me alle to peces tere

The tale of the Shypman

Ne shal I neuiz to go to helle
Be wrey one worde of that ye me telle.
Nat for no cosynage nor alliaunce
But verily for loue and affiaunce
Thus been they swore and therupon they kyft
And eche talkyd to othez what them kyft
Cosyn quod she if that I hadde space
As I haue non and namely in this place
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf.
What I haue suffrid sithen I was a wyf
With my husbonde al be he youre cosyn
Nay quod this monke by god and by seint martyn
He is no more cosyn vnto me
Than is the leef that hangith on the tre
I clepe him so by seint denys of fraunce
To haue the more cause of acquaintaunce
Of you whom I haue louyd specially
A boue alle othez women sikerly
This swere I you on my professioun
Tellith your greef lest he come adoun
And hyth you and go a wey anon
My dere loue quod she o my dan yson
Fulle leef were me this counseyl to hyde
But oute it must it may no lenger a byde
My husbond is to me the worst man
That euir was sithen the worlde began
But sithen I am his wyf it sytteth nat me
To telle no wight of oure pryuyte
Neyther in bedde ne in none othez place
God shelde I sholde tel it for his grace
A wyf sholde nat say of her husbonde
But alle honoure as I can vnderstonde
Saue vnto you thus moche I telle shal I

The tale of the Shypman

As helpe me god he is nat worth at al
In no degre the value of a flye
But yet me greuyth moost his nytgardy
And wele ye wote that women naturallly
Desire thynges sye as wele as do I
They worde that theire husbonde sholde be
Baroy and wyse riche and therto fre
And buyum to his wyf and freshe abedde
But by that ilke lord that for vs bledde
Foz his honoure my self for to arzaie
A sonday next I must nedes pay.
An hundred fraunkes and ellis I am loze
yet were I kyuer to be ynboze
Than me were do disclaunde2 oz belony
And if my husbonde myght it sye
I nere but lost and therfore I you pray
Lene me this summe oz elles must I deye
Dan John I say lene me this hundred frankes
Parde I wol nat fayle you my thankes
If that ye lyst to do that I you pray
Foz at a certayn day I wol you pay
And doon to you what plesaunce oz seruyse
That I may do right as ye lyst deuyse
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce
As foule as hadde genplyon of fraunce
This gentyl monke aunswerd in this maner
Now truly myn owne lady dere
I haue on you quod he so grete a routh
That I you swere and plight my trouthe
That whan youre husbonde is to fflaundes fare
I wol deluyer you oute of this care
Foz I wol brynge you an hundrid frankes
And with that worde he caught her by the shank

The tale of the Shypman

And her embraced hard and byssed her oft
Both now youre Wey quod he alle styl and soft
And let vs dyne as sone as ye may
For by my kalendar it is pryme of the day
Both now and beth as trewe as I shalbe
Now elles god forbede sir quod she
And forth she goth as ioly as a pye
And badde the cokes that they sholde hys
So that men myght dyne at none
Up to her husbond is this wyf gone
And knockith at his countour boldly
Who is there quod he. petyr it am I
Quod she. what sir how long wolle ye fast
How long tyme wol ye rekyng and cast
your summes your bokes and your thynges
The deuyll haue parte of alle suche rekynges
ye haue ynough parde of goddes sonde
Come down to day and let your bagges stonde
Ne be ye nat ashamyd that dan John
shal fasten alle this long day gone
What let vs go here a masse and go dyne
ye quod this man lytel canst thou deuyne
The coriouse besynesse that we haue
for of vs chapemen also god me saue
And by that lorde that clpyd is seint yue
Scarcely amongt twyes ten twelue shalle shryue
Contynually lastyng vnto their age
we may wele make chere and gode bysage
And dryue forth the worlde as it may be
And kepe our astate in pryuyte
Tyl we be dede or elles that we pley
A pylgramage or goon oute of the Wey
And therfore haue I grete necessite

The tale of the Shypman

Upon this queynte worlde to auyse me
Foz euir moze we must stonde in drede
Of happe and fortune in oure chape manhede
To flaundes wol I go to morowe at day
And come ayen as sone as euir I may
Foz whiche dere wyf I the beseeke
As be to euery wight buyum and meke
And foz to kepe oure gode be curious
And honestly gouerne wele oure house
Thou hast ynought in euery maner wyse
That to a thyrsty housholde may suffise
The lackith none ar ray ne no bytyle
Of syluer in thy purse shalt thou nat fayle
And with that worde his counterdore he soytte
And down he goth he wolde no lenger let
And hastely a masse was there sayde
And spedily the tables were layde
And to dyner fast they them spedde
And richely the chapman this monke fedde
And after dyner day John sobirly
This chapman toke a parte propirly
And sayd him thus cosyn it stondith so
That wele I se to bruges wol ye go
God and seint Austyn spede you and gyde
I pray you cosyn wysely thider ye ryde
Gouerne you also wele of youre dyete
Attemperatly and namely in this hete
Bet wyte bs t wo nedith no straunge fare
fare wele cosyn god shelde you fro care
And if any thyng by day or by nyght
Be in my powez or in my myght
That ye me wolde comaunde in any wyse
It shalbe do right as ye wol deuyse

The tale of the Shypman

One thyng or that ye goon if it may be
I pray you to lene it vnto me
An hundred fraunches for a weke or twey
For certayn bestys that I must beye
To store with a place that is oures
God helpe me so I wolde it were poures
I shalle nat fayle of my day
Nat for a thousand frankes o myle wey
But let this thyng be secret I you pray
For yet this nyght this bestys I must beye
And fare now wele myn owen cosen dere
Gramercy of poure coost and of poure there
This noble marchaunt and that anon
Answerd and sayde o cosyn myn dan John
Now siberly this is a smalle request
My golde is poures whan that ye lyst
And nat only my golde but my chaffare
Take that ye lyst god shylde that ye spare
But one thyng ye knowe wele ynough
Of chapmen that their money is their plough
We may creauce whiles we haue a name
But godeles for to be it is a shame
Pay it ayen whan it lyth at poure ease
After my myght fayne wolde I you please
These hundred fraunches sette he forth anon
And pryuelly he toke them to dan John
No wight of alle this londe wist of this lone
Saupng this marchaunt and dan John allone
They drynke and speke androme a while and pley
Tyl that dan John rydeth to his abbey
The morowe cam and forth rideth this marchaunt
To flanders ward his prentyce brought him auant
Tyl he cam to brugges wele and merily

The tale of the Shypman

Now goth this marchaunt wele and besily
Aboute his nedys and byeth and creaunceth
He neyther pleyeth at the dyce ne daunsith
But as a marchaunte shortly to telle
He ledde his lyf and theire I let him duelle
The sonday next that this marchaunt was agoon
To seint denys is comen dan Iho
With crowne and berd alle freshe and newe shaue
In alle this house ther nas so lytel a knaue
Ne no wight elles but he was ful fayne
That my lord dan Ihon was come agayn
And shortly to the popnte right for to goon
This faire wyf accordeth with dan Ihon
That for his hundryd frankes he sholdelal nyght
Haue her in his armes bolt vp right
And this accorde parfoumed is in dede
In myrthe alle nyght a besy lyf they lede
Tyl it was day that dan Iohn yede his we
And bad the meny fare wele and haue gode day
For none of them ne no wight in the toun
Hath of dan Ihon any suspicioun
And forth he rydeth home to his abbey
Or where him lyst no more of him I say
This marchaunt whan that endyd was the feyre
To seint denys he can agayn repaire
And with his wyf he makith feest and chere
And tellith her the chaffare is so dere
That nedes must he make a cheuesauce
For he was bounde in a reconysauce
To pay twenty thousand sheldes anon
For whiche this marchaunt is to paris gone
To borowe of certayn frendes that he hadde
Acertayn of frankes and some with him he ladde

The tale of the Shypman

And whan that he was come into the town
For cheirte and grete affectioun
Vnto dan John he goth first him to pley
Nat for to aye ne borowe of him money
But for to wytte and se his welefare
And for to telle him of his chaffare
As frendes doon whan they mete in fere
Dan John him makith feste and mery there
And he him tolde fulle specially
How he hadde wele spedde and graciously
Thanked be god alle hool his marchaundise
Saue that he must in alke maner wyse
Makyn a cheere saunce as for the best
And than he sholde be in ioy and rest
Dan John aunswerd certis I am fayue
That ye in hele ar comen home agayn
And if that I were rithe as I haue blis
Of twenty thousand sheldes sholde ye nat mys
For ye so kyndely this othez day
Lent me golde and as I can and may
I thanke you by god and by seint Jame
But natheles I toke it vnto oure dame
youre wyf at home the same golde ayen
Vpon youre benche she wote is wele certayn
By certeyn tokenes that I can you telle
Now by youre leue I may no lingere duelle
Dure abbot wol oute of this town anoon
And in his company must I goon
Grete wele oure dame myn owen nece swete
And fare wele dere cosyn tyl we mete
This marchaunt whiche that was ful ware & wyse
Creaunced hath and payd eke in parise
To certayn lumbardes redy in theire honde

The tale of the Shypman

The some of golde and gate of hem his bonde
And home he goth as mery as a poppyngay
For wele he knewe he stode in suche arzaie
That nedes must he Wynne in that byage
A thousand fraunkes aboue alle his costage
His wyf ful redy mette him at the gate
As she was wont of olde vsage algate
And alle that nyght in myrth they be set
For he was riche and clerely oute of det
Whan it was day the marchaunt gan embrace
His wyf alle newe and kyssed her in her face
And by he goth and makith it fulle tough
Nomore quod she by god ye haue ynough
And watounly with him se pleyed
Tyl atte last the marchaunte thus sayd
By god quod he I am a lytel wrothe
With you my wyf alle though it be me lothe
And wote ye why by god as I gesse
That ye haue made a maner straungenesse
Betwyte me and my cosen dan John
Ye sholde haue warned me or I had goon
That he hadde you an hundred fraunkes paide
By redy token and helde him euyl appaied
For that I to him spake of cheuesauce
We se myd so as by his countenaunce
But neuirthelesse be god oure heuyn kyng
I thought to aske of him nothyng
I pray the wif do nomore so
Tel me now or that I fro the goo
If any dettoure haue in myn absence
ypaied the lest by thy nettegence
I myght him aske a thing that he haue paied
This wyf was nat afferde ne affreyde

The tale of the Shypman

But boldly she saide and that anoon
Mary I diffy that fals monke dan John
I reue nat of his toknes neuiz a deel
He toke me certayn golde that wote I wele
What. euyl thedom on his monkes snowte
For god it wote I wende withouten doute
That he hadde geuen it me bicause of you
To do ther with myn honoure and my prowe
For cosynage and eke for belychere
That he hath hadde fulle often tymes here
But sithen I se it stont in suche disiont
I wol aunswere you shortly to the poynt
Ye haue no skatker dettoure than am I
For I wol pay you redily
I roday today if so be that I fayle
I am youre wyf scoze it spon my tayle
And elles I shalle pay as sone as euir I may
For by my trouthe I haue on myn arzap
And nat in wast bestowed it euery deel
And for I haue bestowed it so wele
For youre honoure for goddes sake I say
As be nat wrothe and let vs laught and pley
Ye shalle my ioly body haue to wedde
By godde I wol nat pay yow but a bidde
Forgyue it me myn owne spouse dere
Turneth hether makith bettre there
This marchaunt sawe ther was none other remedy
And for to chide it were but a foly
Sithen that thyng may noon other be
Now wyf he saide and I forgyue it the
And by thy lif be no more so large
Repe beeter thy gode this gyue I the in charge
Thus endith my tale and god vs sende

The tale of the Shypman

Takynge ynogh vnto oure lyues ende

Here endith the shypmannes tale

And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

W He sayd by corpus dominus said oure hoost

Now long moot thou sayle by the coost

Thoug entyl mayster gentyl marinere

God yeue the monke a thousand last quad yere

A ha felawes be ware of suche a iape

The monke put in the mannyshode an ape

And in this wyse eke by seint Austyn

Drawith no monkes no more to youre Inne

But now pas our and lette vs seke aboute

Who shalle telle a tale first of alle this route

A nother tale and with that worde he sayde

As curtesly as it hadde be a mayde

My lady priouresse by youre leue

So that I wylst I sholde you nat greue

I worde deme that ye telle sholde

A tale nexte if so were that ye wolde

Now wol ye bouche sauf my lady dere

Gladly quod she and sayd as ye shal here

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the priouresses prologue

Domine dominus noster quam admirabile

est nomen tuum in vniuersa terra.

I Orde oure lorde thy name euir marvelous

Is in this lartte worlde y spred quod she

For nat alle only on thy laude precious

Parfourmyd is by men of dignyte

But by the mouthe of children thy bounte

Parfourmed is for on the brest so whyng

Somtyme she we they thyn heryng

Wherfore in laudes as I can and may

The prologue of the Prioressse

Of the and of the white lily floure
Whiche that the bare is a mayde alwey
To telle a story I wol do my labour
Nat that I may encrese her honoure
For she her self is honoure and the rote
Of bounte nexte her sonne and soules bote
O moder mayd o mayde and modre fre
O busshe vnbrent brennyng in moyses sight
That rauesshedyst down from the deyte
Through thy humblenes the goost that in the light
Of whose vertue whan he thy hert lyght
Concepued was the faders sapience
Helpe me to telle it in thy reuerence
Lady thy bounte thy magnificence
Thy vertue and thy grete humylite
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science
For somtyme lady or men praye the
Thou goost biforn of thy benignyte
And getyst vs the light of thy prayer
To gyde vs vnto thy sone so dere
My honnyng is so weke o blyssfulle quene
For to declare thy high worthynesse
That I ne may the weyght sustene
But as a childe of twelmonth olde or lesse
That can vnneeth any worde expresse
Right so fare I and therfore I you pray
Bidith my song as I shalle you say

Here endith the priouresses prologue
And here betynneth her tale

The tale of the Priouresse



t Her was in Asie in a grette cyte
Amonge cristen folke a Jurye
Susteyned by a lorde of that countre
For foule vsure and lucre of belony
Hateful to crist and to his company
And through this strete men myght ryde and wend
For it was fre and open at euery ende
A lytel scole of cristen folke there stode
Down at the ferther ende in whiche ther were
Children an hepe comen of cristen blode
That lernyd in scole yere by yere
Suche maner doctryne as men vsen there
This is to say to synge and to rede
As smale children doon in their childhede
Among these children was a wydowes sone
A lytel clerk yon seyn yere of atte
That day by day to scole was his wone
And eke also where that he sawe the ymatte

The tale of the Shypman

Of cristes modre had he in vsage
As him was taught to kni le adoun and say
His Aue maria as he goth by the Wey

Thus hath this Wydow her lytel sonne taught
Dure blissed lady cristes modre dere
To worshop ay and he forgate it naught
For the sely childe wolde alwey sone lere
But whan I remembre me on this matere
Seint nycolas stont euir in my presence
For he so yong to crist dyd reuerence

This lytel chyld his litel booke lernyng
As he sat in the scole at his prymer
He Alma redemptoris mater herd syng
As children lernyd their antiphoner
And as he durst he drewe ay nere and nere
And herknyd ay the wordes and the note
Tyl he the first vers coude alle by rote

Naught wylt he what this latyn was to say
For he so yong and tendre was of age
But on a day his fela we gan he pray
To expounde him the song in his langage
Or telle why this song was in vsage
This prayde he him to constrew and declare
Fulle ofte tymes vpon his knees bare

His fela we whiche that elder was than he
Aunswerd him thus this I haue herd say
Was made of oure blissed lady fre
Her to salue and eke her to pray
To be oure helpe and socoure whan we dey
I can no more expoune in this mater
I lerne song I can but lytel gramer

And is this song made in reuerence
Of cristes modre sayd this innocente

The tale of the Priouresse

Now certayn I wol do my diligence
To conne it alle or cristmas is aly went
Though that I for my prymer be shent
And sholde be bete thries in an houre
I wor it honne oure lady to honoure

His felawe taught him homward pryuelly
Fro day to day tyl he coude it al by rote
And than he song it wele and boldly
Fro worde to worde accordyng by the note
T wys aday it passed through his throte
To scoleward and homward when he went
In cristes modre set was alle his entent

As I haue sayd through oute the Jury
This lytelchilde cam walkyn to and fro
Ful merily wolde he syng and cry
O alma redemptoris mater euirno
The swetnesse his hert persed so

O cristes modre that he to her pray
He can nat stynt of syngyng by the wey

Oure first fo the serpent sathanas
That hath in iewes hert his waspes neste
O p swalle and said o ebrayn people allas
Is this a thyng that is to vs honest
That suche a boy shal walke as him lyst
In youre dyspyte and syng of suche sentence
Whiche is apeust oure lawes reuerence

Fro thens forth the Jewys haue conspired
This innocent oute of this worlde to chase
An homicyde therto haue they hyred
Right at an aley hadde a pryue place
And as the chylde gan forth by to pace
This cursrd Jewe him hent and held fast
And cutte his throte aud in a pytte him cast

The tale of the Priouresse

I say that in a Wardrope they him thre we
Where as the Jewys purgde their entrayl
Cursed folke of herodes alle ne we
What may your euyl entent you auayle
Murdre wol oute certeyne it wol nat fayle
And nameley ther the honoure of god shal sprede
The blode oute crieth on youre cursed dede

A martir sowdyd into birgynite
Now mayst thou syng folowynge euir in one
The white lambe celestiaalle quod he
Of whiche the grete euangelyst seint John
In pathmos wrote whiche sayth that they goon
Bifore this lambe and syng a song ay ne we
That neuir flesschely woman they ne kne we

This poure widowe a wayteth alle that nyght
After her lytel childe and he cam naught
For whiche as sone as it was day light
With face pale of drede and besy thought
She hath at scole and elles where him sought
Tyl fynally so fer she gan espye
That he last seyn was in the Jury

With moders pyte in her brest enclosed
She goth as she were half oute of her mynde
To euery place where she hath supposed
By lykelyhede her lytel childe to fynde
And euir on cristes modre meke and kynde
She cryde and at the last thus she wronght
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought

She aveth and she freyneth pytously
Of euery Jew that duellyd in that place
To telle her if her childe went ougth forth by
They sayd nay but iesu of his grace
paue in her thought within a lytel space
That in that place after her sone she cryde

The tale of the Priouresse

Where he was cast in a pyt besyde

O grete god that parfourmyth thy laude
By mouthe of innocentes lo here thy myght
This gemme of chastite this emeraude
And eke of martirdome the ruby bright
There he with throte y coruen tyth by right
He Alma redemptoris gan to syng
So loude that alle the space gan for to ryng

The cristen folke that by the strete went
In cam for to wondre bpon this thyng
And hastely they for the prouost sent
Whiche fonde the chyld freshely yet bledyng
And herieth crist that is of heuyn kyng
And eke his modre honoure of mankynde
And after that the Jues let he bynde

This childe with pytous lamentacion
Op taken was syngyng this song alway
And with honoure and grete procession
They cary him into the nexte abbey
His moder swounyng by the bere ley
Wherwith myght the people that was there
This sorouful rachel brynggen from the bere
With turment and with shameful deth echoon
This prouest doth thies Jues for to sterue
That of this murdre wist and that a noon
He nolde no suche cursydnesse obserue
Euyll shal he haue that euyll wol deserue
Wherfore with wylde horse he dyd them drawe
And after he haungyd them by the laue

Vpon his bere aplyeth this innocent
Bifore the high autre while the masse last
And after that the abbot and his couent
Them spedde for to bery him ful fast
And whan they holy water on him cast

The tale of the Priouresse

yet spake this childe whan sprent was holy water
He song o alma redemptoris mater,

This abbot whiche that was an holy man
As monkes been or elles ought to be
This yong childe to coniure he began
And sayd odere childe I coniure the
In the vertue of the holy trinyte
Tel me what is thy cause for to syng

Sithen that thy throte is cutte to my semynge
My throte is cutte but buto my necke boon
Sayd this chylde and as by wey of kynde
I shorde haue dyed ye long tyme a goon
But Jesu crist as ye in bokes fynde
Wol that his glory last and be in mynde
And for the worship of his moder dere
yet may I syng o alma loude and clere

This werke of mercy cristes modre swete
Glouyd alwey as after my konnyng
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete
To me she cam and badde me for to syng
This anteme verily in my dyng
As ye haue herde and whan that I hadde song
Ae thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tong
Wherfore I syng and syng must certayn

In honoure of that blyssed mayde fre
Tyl fro my tong taken is the greyn
And after that thus sayd she to me
My lytel childe than wol I feche the
Whan that the greyn is fro the tong y take
Be nat agast I wol the nat forsake

This holy monke this abbot him mene I
His tongge oute caught and toke a wey the greyn
And he gaue by the goost fulle sofly
And whan this abbot hadde this meruayle seyn

The tale of the Priouresse

His salt terys trilled down as rayne
And grouelyng platte he fyl to the grounde
And styl he lay as he hadde be y bounde

The couent eke lay vpon the pament
Wepnyng and heripng cristes modre dere
And after that by they rose and forth they went
And toke a wey this martir fro his here
And in a tombe of marbyl stones clere
Enclosen they this lytel body swete
There he is now god lene vs for to mete

Dyong hugh of lyncoln slayn also
With cursed Jues as it is notable
For it is but a lytel while ago
Pray eke for vs we synful folke vnstable
That of his mercy god so mercyable
Dy vs his grete mercy multiplie
For reuerence of his modre mary

Here endith the priouresse tale

Here folowith the prologue of chaucers tale
W^hich in sayd was this myracle euery man
As sobre was that wondre was to se

Tyl that oure hoost to iapen began
And than at erst he loked vpon me
And sayd thus what man art thou quod he
Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare
For euil vpon the grounde I se the stare

Approche nere and loke by merily
Now ware you sires and let this man haue place
He is shape in the wast as wele as I
This were a popet in an arme to embrace
For any woman smalle and fayre of face
He semyth elyssh by his countenaunce
For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce
Say no w^h somwhat sithen other folke haue

Ryme of Sir Topas

Tel vs a tale of myrthe and that a noon
Hoost quod he ne be nat euyl appayed
Foz othez tale certayn can I none
But of a ryme I lernyd long a goon
ye quod he that is gode ynough let vs here
Som deyrnte thyng me thynketh by thy chere
Here endith the prologue
And begynneth Ryme of sir Topas



Esten lordes in gode euten
And I wol telle herament
Of myrthe and of solace
And of a knyght fayre and gent
In batel and in turnament
His name was was sir Topas
y borne he was of fer countre
In flaundes alle be yonde the see
At popoznyng in the place
His fader was a man ful fre
A lorde he was of that countre

Ryme of Sir Topas

As it Was goddes grace
Sir Topas weyt a doughty sweyne
White was his face as paynemayne
His lyppes reed as rose
His rode is lyke scarlet in greyn
As I telle you in gode certayn
He hadde a semely nose
His here his berde was lyke saffron
That to his gyrdyl raught a douyn
His shone of fyne cordwane
Of brugges were his hosen broun
His robe was of sylcatoun
That cost many a jane
He coude hunt at the wylde dere
And ryde an haukyng for ryuere
With grey goshauke on honde
Therto he was a grete archere
Of wraстыng was ther none his pere
Ther any ram sholde stonde
ful many a mayde bright in boure
They mozned for him paramoure
Whan them were bet to fleke
But he was chaste and no lechoure
And swete as is the bromble floure
That berith the rede hepe
And so it fel bpon a day
for soth as I you telle may
Sir Topas wolde oute ryde
He worde bpon his horse gray
And in his honde a launce gay
A long swerde by his syde
He pryched through a fayre forest
Therin is many a wylde best
ye bothe buche and hare

Ryme of sir Topas

And as he pryched north and est
I telle it you him hadde almest
Betwde a sozr care
Ther sprongen herbes grette and smale
The licorice and the retuale
And many a clove gilofez
And notemyge to put in ale
Whether it be moyst or stale
Or for to lay in cofre
The birdes syng it is no nay
The sperhaune and the poppyngay
That ioye was to here
The throstyl made eke his lay
The wode doone vpon the spray
He sang ful loude and clere
Sir Topas fyl in loue longyng
At whan he herde the thurstyl syng
And pryched as he were wode
His fayre stede in his prichyng
So swette that myght him wryng
His sydes were al blode
Sir Topas eke so wery was
For prichyng in the soft gras
So fiers was his corage
That down he leyde him in the place
To make his stede some solace
And gaue him gode forage
A seint mary benedicite
What ayleth this loue at me
To bynde me so soze
Ore dremyd alle this nyght parde
An elfe quene sholde my lady be
And stepe vndre my goze
An elfe quene wol I haue y wys

Ryme of Sir Topas

For in this worlde no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun
Alle othez women I forsake
And to an elphe quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun
Into his sadyl he clambe anoon
And pricked ouer stile and stone
An elphe quene to a sppe
Tyl he so long hath ryden and goon
That he fonde a pryue wone
In the countre of fayre so wylde
For in that countre was ther none
Neyther wyf ne chylde
Tyl that ther cam a grete ghaunt
His name was sir oliphaunt
A parlous man of dede
And sayde childe by termaghaunt
But if thou pryche oute of myn ghaunt
Anone I sle thy stede With mace
Here is this quene of fayre
With harpe and lute and symphony
Duellynge in this place
The childe sayde also moot I the
To morowe wol I mete with the
Whan that I haue myn armoure
And yet I hope par my fay
That thou shalt with this launce hay
Abpen it ful soze Thy ma we
Shal I perce if may
Or it be fully pryue of the day
For here shalt thou be slaue
Sir Topas drewe abake fulle faste
The ghaunt at him stones cast
Dute of a fyl staf slynge

Ryme of sir Topas

But fayre a scappd sir Thopas
And al was through goddes grace
And through his faire beryng
ye lysteneth lordynges to my tale
Merper than the nyghtyngale
I wol with you rounne
How sir Thopas with spydes smale
Prichyng our hylle and dale
Is come agayn to toune
His mery men comaundith he
To make him bothe game and glee
For nedes must he fight
With a gyaunt with hedes thre
For paramoure and iolite
Of one that shone so brighte
Come do he sayde my mynstralles
And gestoures for to telle tales
Anone in my armyng
Of romaunces that been ryalle
Of popes and of cardynalle
And eke of loue longyng
They fet him forth swete wyne
And mede in a messelyne
And ryalle spycloze
Of gyngebrede that was so fyne
And lycorice and eke comyn
With sugre that is try
He hadde nexte his white lere
Of clothe alake fyne and clere
A breche and eke a sherte
And next his shert a haketon
And our that an habergeon
For persyng of his herte
And ouer that a fyne hauberke

Ryme of Sir Topas

Was alle y wrought of Iues warthe
ful strong it was of plate
And ouer that his cote armoure
As whyte as is the lyle floure
In whiche he wol debate
His shelde was al of golde so rede
And therein was a bores hede
A charbokyl by his syde
And there he swore on ale and brede
How that the gyaunt shalbe dede
Betwixte what may betwixte
His ianbedeux were of quyreboty
His swerdis shethe of yuory
His helme of latoun bright
His sadyl was of rewelbone
His brydel as the sone shone
Or as the mone light
His spere was of fyne cypresse
That bedith warre and nothyng peas
The hede fulle sharpe y grounde
His stede was alle dappyl gray
It goth an amble in the wey
Fulle softly and rounde in londe
O lordynges myn here is a fytt
If ye wol any more of it
To telle yet wolke I fonde
n Or holde your mouthe paz charite
 Bothe knyght and lady fre
And herkne to my spelle
Of a batayl of cheualry
And of ladyes loue drurye
Anoon I wol you telle
Men speke of Romaynes of pryce
Of hornchylde and of ppytse

Ryme of sir Topas

Of beuys and of sir Guy
Of sir libeuy and of sir playndemoure
But sir Topas berith the floure
Of ryalle cheualry
His gode stede alle he bestrode
And forth vpon his wey he rode
As sparke oute of bronde
Vpon his creest he bare a toure
And therein styched a lylie floure
God shelde his body from shonde
And for he was a knyght auenterous
He nolde slepe in none house
But liggyn in his hode
His bright helme was his wongez
And by bapteth his destrez
On herbes fyne and good
Him self dranke water of the Welle
As dyd the knyght sir percyaue
So worthely vndre wede
n D more of this for goddes dignyte
 For thou quod oure hoost makyst me
So wery of thy berzyle wdnesse
That also wys god my soule bles
Wyn eris akyn of thy draffy speche
Now suche a ryme the deuyt I beteche
This may wele be a ryme doggrel quod he
Why so quod I why wolt thou let me
More of my tale than a nother man
Sithen it is the best ryme that I can
By god quod he fulle playnly at one worde
Thy draffy rymyng is nat worth a torde
Thou dost naught elles but spendest tyme
Sir at one worde thou shalt nolentgez ryme
Let se whether thou canst aught telle in geste

The Wordes of the hoost

Or telle in prose som what at the lest
In whiche ther may be some myrthe or doctryne
Gladly quod he by goddes swete pyne
I wol you telle a lytel thyng in prose
That ought to lyke you as I suppose
Or elles certayn ye be dangerous
It is a moral tale vertuons
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folke as I shal you deuyse
And thus ye wote that euery euangelyst
That telle vs the payne or Jesu criste
Ne sayth nat alle thyng as his felawe doth
But neuir theles their sentence is alle soth
And alle accordyng as in their sentence
Al be ther in their tellyng difference
For som of them sayth more and some lesse
Whan they his pytous passioun expresse
I mene of marke mathewe Luke and Ihon
But doutles their sentence is alle one
Therfore lordynges I you besече
If that ye thynke I bary in speche
As thus though I telle some dele more
Of prouerbes than ye haue herde bifore
Comprehended in this lytel tretys here
To enforce with the effecte of my matere
And though I nat the same wordes say
As ye haue herde yet to you alle I pray
Blamyth me nat for as in my sentence
Shulle ye nowhere fynde no difference
For the sentence of this tretys lyte
After the whiche mery tale this I wryte
And therfore herkueth what I shalle say
And let me telle my tale I you pray
Sequitur Chaucers tale

The Tale of Chaucer



a yong man that called was
 mellebeus the whiche was
 myghty and ryche begat a
 daughter vpon his wyf that called
 was prudence. whiche daughter cal-
 led was. Sophye. vpon a day besyl
 that he for his disporte wente hym in
 to the feildys for to playe. his wyf &
 his daughter hath he lefte within his
 hous of wiche the dores were fast
 shutte. Thre of his olde foes hath hit
 aspyed & sette ladders vnto the wal-
 les of his hous & by the wyndowes
 ben entryd in And bete his wyf: and
 wounded his daughter with fye mor-
 tal woundes in fyue sondrye places
 that is to say in her feet. in her han-
 des. in her eres. in her nose and in her
 mouth. and leften her for dede and
 wenten her waye. whan mellebeus
 returned was in to his hous and sa-
 we al this myschysse. he spake a mad

man rented his clothes began to we-
 pe and crye.

prudence his wif as ferforth
 as she durst besoughte hym
 of his weping to stynte. But
 not forthy he began to wepe & crye
 euer lenger the more. This noble
 wyf prudence remembred her vpon
 the sentence of Dydre in his booke
 that cleped is the Remedye of loue.
 where as he sayth. he is a fool that
 distrobleth the modre to wepe in the
 dethe of her childe. tyl she hath wepte
 her fille as for a certayn terme. And
 than shal a man doo his diligence
 wyth ampyable wordes her to com-
 forte. And praye her of her wepyng
 to cese. for whiche reason this noble
 wyf prudence suffryd her husbonde
 to wepe & crye as for a certayn space
 And whā she sawe her tyme. she said
 to hym in this wyse. Alas my lord

sayd she why make ye your self for to be lyk a fool for soth it apertayneth not to a wyse man to make iuche sorowe your doughter by the grace of god shal warisshe & escape. & al were it so þ she right now were dede. ye ne ought not for her deth your self to dystrope. Senekre sayth. the wyse man shal take not to grete dyffort for the deth of his children. but certes he shuld suffre it in paciēce as wel as he abydeth the deth of his owen propre persone.

This mellebe⁹ answerd anon and sayde what man shote of his wepyng stynte þ hath so grete cause to wepe. Ihesu cryst our lord hym self wepte for the dethe of lazarus his frende. Prudence answerd certes wel I wote a temperate wepyng is nothing defended to hym that is sorowful amonge folkie in sorowe. But it is rather graunted hym to wepe. The apostle Paule vnto the Romayns wryteth. Many shal reioyse wyth hem that make ioye and wepe wyth suche folkie as pynne. But a temperate wepyng tought it be graunted hym. Dyrageous wepyng certis is defeded mesure of wepyng shold be considred after the lore þ Senekre techeth vs whā thy frende is dede sayd he. Lete not thin eyen be to moyst of teerys ne to moche drie. Al though thy teerys com to thy eyen late hem not falle. And whan thou hast lost thy frende. do dyligently to gete the another frēde. And this is better than for to wepe for thy frende

whiche thou hast lost. For therein is no bote. And therfore yf thou gouerne the by sapience put away sorowe out of thy herte.

R. Emembre the that Ihesus Syrali sayth. That a mā that is Joyous & glade in herte. it hym conserueth floursshyng in age. and sothly sorowful herte maketh his bones drye. He sayth eke thus that sorowe in herte killeth ful many a man. Salamon sayth that as moghtes in the shep fles anoyeth the clothes. & the smale womes the tres. Right lo anoyeth sorow the herte of a mā. wherfor be ought as wel in the deth of our chyldren as in the losse of our goodes temporell haue paciēce. Remembryng on the pacient Job. Whan he had lost his children and his temporell goodes & had endured many a ful greuous temptation. yet sayd he thus. Dur lord hath gyuen it to me. Dur lord hath beraste hit me. right so as our lord hath wold right so it is don. y blessing be the name of our lord.

To thise forsayd thinges answerde mellebeus to his wyf prudēce alle thy wordes ben soth said he and therto proufftable. But truly myn hert is trobeld with this sorowe so greuously that I wote not what to doo. Late al thy trewe frendes sayd prudēce & alle thy lynage whiche that ben wise come vnto the. & telle to them your caas and herken what thy say in couceylling & gouern you after her sentence.

Salamon saith werke alle thy thinges by counceyl & thou shalt neuer repente. Than by cause of the counceyl of his wyf prudence. This Mellebeus lete callen a grete congregacyon of folkre as Lirurgyens. Phisiciens: olde folkre and yonge and some of his olde enemyes reconceyled as by theyr semblance to his loue & to his grace and there Bithall came somme of his neyghbours that dyd hym reuerence more for drede than for loue as it happeth ofte. There comen also many subtil flateres and wyse aduocates lerned in the lawe. And whan thys folkre to gyder assembled were. This Mellebeus shewed to them in sorowe ful wyse his caas And by the maner of his speche hit semed that in his herte he bare a cruel yre redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodenly desyred that he shol begynne the warre. But neuer theles yet ayed he theyr counceyl vpon this mater. A cyrurgyen by lycence and assente of suche as were wyse to se vp. And to Mellebeus sayd as ye may here.

He sayd he as to vs Cyrurgyens. hit apperteyneth þe we doo to euery wyght the best that we can doo. where as we be wythholden and to our patiente that we do no dommage. wherfor hit happeth many tyme and ofte That whan two men haue the other wounded one Cyrurgyen helet hē bothe. wherfore vnto our arte hit is not pertynent to norisse werre. ne

partyes to supporte. But certes as to the warpysshynge & helyng of your doughter al be it so that she be peryllously hurt and wounded. we shal do ententyf besynes fro day to day. that wyth the grace of god she shal be hool and sound as sone as possible is. Almost in the same wyse the phisiciens answered saue that they sayden a fewe wordes moo. That lyklyk as maladyes ben cured by theyr contraryes. right so shal men warpysshē werre by pees. His seyned frendes þe semed reconceyled and his flaterars made semblaunte of wepyng & empeyred and grutchēd moche in this mater. Drepyng gretely mellebeus of myght. of power of rychesse and of frendes. dispraysing the power of his aduersaryes. and sayd sterly. þe he anone shold wrelen hym on his aduersaryes begynnynge warre. By roose than an aduocate þe was wyse by leue and by counceyl of other that were wyse. And sayd lordynge for the nede whiche we ben assembled in this place is ful heuy thing and high mater by cause of the wronge and of the wyckednes that hath ben don and elze by reson of the grete domages that in tyme comynge be possible to falle for the same. And elze by reson of the grete richesse and of the power of the partyes bothe. For the whiche hit were a ful grete peryll to erren in this mater. wherfor mellebeus this is our entent. we counceyl you: aboue al thing that right anon thou do dyligence in slepyng of thy

propre persone in suche wyse þ̄ thou
 ne want none espye ne watche. thy
 body for to saue. & after in thy hous
 we counceple that thou sette suffici-
 ent garnyson so as they may as wel
 thy body as thy hous defende. But
 certes for to meue warre ne sodenly
 for to do vengeance. we may not de-
 me in so lyplytyme that hit shold be
 prouffitable wherfor we aye leyser
 a space to haue delyberacion in this
 caas to deme. For the comyn prouer
 sayth thus he that sone demeth. sone
 shal repente. and elke men say that þ̄
Juge is wyse þ̄ sone vnderfondeth
a mater and Jugeþ by leyser. For
 alle be it so that tarpeng be noyful.
 Al gates it is not to be reprovud in ye
 uyng of Jugement ne in vengeance
 takyng whan it is sufficient & reso-
 nable. And that shewed our lord ihu
 cryst by ensample. for whan the wo-
 man þ̄ was taken in ad voutry was
 brought in his þ̄sence to knowe what
 shold be do of her personne. Al be it þ̄
 he wyst welke hym self what he wold
 do. yet ne wold he answeere soudenly
 but he wolde haue delyberacion. and
 in the ground he wrote twyes. And
 by this cause we aye delyberacioun
 and we shal than by the grace of god
 coucepl yow that thing that is most
 proffitable. Up starte than the
 yonge folke attones & the most par-
 te of this copanye haue scorned thys
 olde wyse man and begonne to ma-
 ke noyse and saiden Right so as whi-
 le that yron is hote men sholde smite.
Right so while that this thing is ful
she and newe shold men wrelen her
wronges. And wyth a loude voyz

they cryden warre. warre. Up rose
 then one of this olde wyse men. and
 made contenance wyth his hande þ̄
 men shold holde hem styl & yeue hym
 andyence. Lordynges sayd he ther is
 ful many a man that cryeth warre
 warre that wote full ytyl what war-
 re amounteth. warre at his begyn-
 nyng hath so grete an entree and soo
 large þ̄ euery wyght may entre whā
 hym lylteth & lyghtly fynde warre.
 But certes what ende that therof shal
 falle it is not lpyght to knowe. for so-
 thsly whan that warre is ones begon
 there is full many a childe vnborne
 of his moder that shal dye and sterue
 yong by cause of that warre or ellys
 lyue in sorow or depe in wretchyd-
 nesse. And thefor or ony warre begin-
 men must haue grete councepl & gre-
 te delyberacion. And whan this olde
 man wende to haue enforced his tale
 by reasons. wel nynghe attones began
 they al tarise for to breke his tale and
 bad ful faste his wordes tabregge.
for sothly who so prechpeth to them
that haue no luste to here his tale his
wordes or his sermon anoyeth them
for ihesus sprak sayth that musike
in wyppng is a noyous thing. This
 is as moche to saye. as moche away-
 leth to spelre before folke. to whom
 his speche anoyeth. As it doth to sin-
 ge before hym that wepeth And whā
 this olde man sawe þ̄ he wanted au-
 dience Al shamefast he sette hym don
 agayn. For salamon saith. there as
 thou mayst haue none audience. en-
 force the not to spelre. I see wel said
 this wyse man þ̄ the comyn prouerbe
 is soth. That good coucepl wanteth

whan it is moſte nede.

Et had this mellebeus in
 p his counceyl many folke
 that priuely in his ere cou-
 cepled hym certayn thinges & coun-
 cepled hym contrarpe in general au-
 dience. whan Wellebeus ſawe that
 the greteſt parte of his counceyl we-
 re accorded that he ſhould make war-
 re. anon he condeſcended to theyr cou-
 ceylling and fully affermed theyr
 ſentence.

p lord ſaid prudence I you
 m beſeche as hertheyſ as I da-
 re & can ne haſte you not
 to faſte. And for alle guerdons as
 yeue me audyence. For piers alſons
 ſayth. who ſo doth to the other good
 or harme haſte the not to acqyite it.
 for in this wyſe thy frende wyl aby-
 de. and thyn enemye ſhal the lenger
 lpye in drede. The prouerbe ſayth he
 haſtith wel that can abyde wyſely. &
 in wyrdred haſte is no proſſyt.

His Wellebeus anſwerde
 t to his wyf prudence. I pur-
 poſe not ſayd he to welre
 by thy counceyl for many cauſes and
 reſons for certes euery wyght wold
 holde me than a fool. this is to ſaye
 yf I for thy counceylling wold chā-
 ge thinges that ben ordeyned and af-
 fermed by ſo many wyſe peple. Ses-
 condly I ſaye that alle women ben
 wicked and none good of them alle.
 For of a thouſand men ſayth ſalamō
 I fond one good. But of al women
 certes good women fonde I neuer
 noon. And alſo certes yf I gouerne

me by thy counceyl it ſhould ſeme that
 I hade gyue to the ouer me the maſ-
 tye. And god forbede that it were ſo
 for Iheſus ſprak ſayth that yf thy
 wyf hane the mayſtye. She is con-
 trarious to her huſbond. And ſala-
 mon ſayth to thy wyf ne to thy chyl-
 de ne to thy frende neuer in thy lpye
 yeue power ouer thy ſelf. for better
 it were that thy chyl dren aye of the
 thynges that hem nedeth. than thou
 ſe thy ſelf in the hondes of thy chyl-
 dren and certes yf I ſhould werde by
 counceylling my counceyl muſt be
 ſomtyme ſecret tyl it were tyme that
 it muſte be knowe. And this may
 not be yf I ſhould be counceyled by
 the. for women can kepe no counceyl

han dame prudence fulde
 w bonaytly and wyth grete
 pacience hade herde al that
 her huſbond likre for to ſay. thā ayed
 ſhe of hym licence for to ſpelre & ſayd
 in this wyſe my lorde ſayd ſhe as to
 your firſt reſon it may lightly be anſ-
 werd for I ſay that it is no ſolpe to
 chaunge counceyl whan the thyng
 is chaunged or ellis whan the thyng
 ſemeth other wyſe thā it was before
 and more ouer I ſay though that ye
 haue ſworn and be hyght to per for
 me your empyſe. and by Iuff cauſe
 ye do it not. men ſhoulde not ſay ther-
 for that ye were a lye ne forſworn.
 For that booke ſayth h the wyſe man
 maketh no leſpug whan he tometh
 his corage to the better. And al be it
 ſo that your empyſe be eſtablyſſhid
 and ordeyned by grete multitude of

peple. yet dar ye not accomplysse þe
same ordenaunce but yow like. for
the trouthe of thynges and the prof
fyt be rather found in fewe folkie that
ben wyse and full of reson than by
grete multytude of peple wher enery
mā claterith what þe him lyst. sothly
suche multytude of peple is not ho
nest. and to the second reson wher as
ye sayn that al women ben wycked
Save your grace. certes ye despice al
women in this wyse. and he that all
despiseþ. al despiseþ as saith the bo
ke. ⁊ senekre sayth who so wol haue
sappence shal no man dyspryse. but
he shal gladly teche the science that he
can wythout presumption. or pryde.
And suche thynges as he can not. he
shal not be ashamed for to lerne hem
and enquire of lasse folkie than hym
self. And that there hath ben many a
good woman. it may be preynd. for
crist wolde neuer descende for to be
borne of a woman. yf al womē had
be wycked. and after that for the gre
te bounte that is in our lord ihu crist
whan he was risen from deth to lyf.
apperid rather to a woman than to
his appostles. and though that sala
mon said he fond neuer womā good
yet foloweth not therfor that al wo
men ben wycked for thought he fond
de no good woman certes many a
nother mā hath fonden many a wo
man ful good. and ful trewe. or ellis
peraventure thentent of Salamon
was this that in souerayn bounte he
fond no woman. This is to say that
there is no wyght so good that he ne
wanteth som of the perfectiō of god

that is his malier.

But thryde reson is thys.
n ye saye that yf ye gouerne
you be my counceyl it shol
de seme that ye had yewe me the maist
trye and the lordship ouer your perso
ne. Syre saue your grace. it is not so
yef it so were that noman shold be
councellid but only of hem that had
lordship and maistrie of his persone
Men wold not be counceylid so of
te as they ben. for sothly that man þe
ayeth councyl of a. purpos. yet hath
he his fre choys whether he wyl wer
ke by that councyl or not. And as to
your fourth reson there that ye say þe
the Janglerye of woman can not hy
de thynges that they knowe. as who
sayth a woman can not hyde þe shee
woot. Syre thysse wordes been to
vnderstonde of women þe ben Jan
glresses and wickid of whiche wo
men men say. that thre thynges dry
uen a man sone out of his hous that
is to saye. smolre. droppynng of rayn
and wyckid wyues. And of suche
women sayth Salamon. that it we
re better to dwellen in deserte. than
wyth a woman that is ryotous. and
syr by your leue that am not I.
for ye haue ful ofte assayed my gre
te splence and my grete patience.
And elze how wel I can hyden and
hele thynges that men ought secretly
to hyde. And sothly as to your
fyfthe reson where that ye saye that
in wickid counceyl women Bayn
quisshe men. god wote that reson shā
deth here in no stede. for vnder
stonde now that ye aye counceyl to

do wyckednes And yf ye wol werke
 wyckednes. And your wyf restrayn
 ne that wycked purpoos and ouer
 come you by reison and by good coun
 ceyl. Certes your wyf ought rather
 to be prayesd than to be blamed.

Thus shold ye vnderstode the philo
 sophre that wickid women bayn
 quisse her husbondes. And there as
 ye blamen alle women and her re
 sons. I shalle shewe by ensample þ
 they be good and proufftable. Eke
 somne men haue sayd that the coun
 ceyl of women is to dere. or ellis to
 lityl of pryse. But al be it so þ many
 women be bad. & her counceyl euyl
 and nothing worth. yet haue men
 founde ful many a good woman &
 discrete and wyse in counceyllynge.
 Lo Jacob be the counceyl of his mo
 der Rebecca whan the blessing of y
 saac his fader and the lordship ouer
 al his brethern. Judith by her goode
 counceyl deliuered the cyte of Beethule
 in whiche he dwellyd out of the han
 des of olyppernes that had besieged
 it and wold haue it destroyed. Abi
 gail deliueryd Nabal her husbond
 fro dauid the kynge that wolde haue
 slayn hym And presyd the yre of the
 kynge by her wytte and by her good
 counceyl. Hester by the counceyl
 enhaunced gretely the people of god
 in the Regne of Assuerus the kynge
 & sam the bouite in good counceyllynge
 of many a good woman men may
 telle. And eke more ouer whan our
 lord god had made Adam our for
 mer fader. he sayd in this wyse. it is

not good man to be allon. make we
 to hym an helpe semblable to hym
 for io here may ye see that yf womē
 were not good and her counceyl good
 and proufftable. Our lord god of
 heuen wold neu haue wrought hem
 ne callid hem helpe of man but ra
 ther confusion of man. And thes
 re sayd ones a clerke in two versys.
 what is better thā Iaspar. wysedom
 And what is better than wysedom:
 woman & what is better than good
 woman. no thyng. And so fyr by
 mony other reisons may ye see that
 many women been good and theyr
 counceyl good and proufftable.

And therfor yf ye wyl trust to my
 counceyllynge I shal restore you your
 doughter hool and founde. And eke
 I wyl do so moche that ye shalle ha
 ue honour in this caas. Whan
 mellebec had herde the wordes of his
 wyf Prudence. He sayd thus. I see
 wel that the worde of Salamon is
 soth: He saith that wordes that been
 spoken discretely by ordenaunce ben
 honycrombes for they yeuue swetenes
 to the soule & holsomnes to the bodi.

By cause of thy swete wordes &
 eke for I haue assayed and preued
 thy grette sapience and thy grette trou
 the I wyl gouerne me by thy coun
 ceyl in al maner thyng.

Now fyr sayd dame prudence. syn
 ye bouchesauf to be gouerned by my
 counceyl I wyl enforme you how
 ye shal gouerne you in chesynge of
 your counceyl. first to fore al wer
 lys ye shal besече the hyghe god þ

he be your counceyl. & shape you to suche entent þe he yeue you counceyl & confort. As to þe taught his sone. At al tymes thou shalt please & praye him to dreſſe thy wayes. And loke that al thy counceyl be in hym for euermore.

Saynt Jame elſe ſayth. yf any of you haue neede of ſapience. Aſke it of god. And after that than ſhal ye take counceyl in your ſelf. And exampne wel your thoughtes of ſuche thinges as ye thynke that ben beſte for your prouffyt. And than ſhal ye dryue away from your hertes thoſe thinges þe ben contraryous to good counceylle. This is to ſay. yre. couetyſe. & haſte-
neſſe. firſt he that aſketh counceyl of hym ſelf. Certes he muſt be wythouten yre. for many cauſes. The firſte is this þe that hath grete yre and wrath in hym ſelf. he weneth alway to do thyng that he may not do. and ſecondly he that is prouſ & wrathful may not deme wel. And he that may not deme wele may not wel counceyl. Another is this. he that is prouſ & wrathful as ſayth Senecle may not ſpeke but blameful thynges. And wyth his vicyous wordes he ſtereth other folke to angre and to yre. And elſe ſyrt ye muſt dryue couetyſe out of your herte. for thappoſtle ſayth that couetyſe is the rote of alle harmes. And truſte wel that a couetous man can not deme wel ne thynke but only to fulfyll the ende of his couetyſe. and certes that may neuer be accompliſhed. For euermore the more ha- bundaunce a man hath of richeſſe. the more he deſpeth. And ye muſte

alſo dryue out of your herte haſtynes. For certes ye may not deme for the beſte haſteli a ſoden thought that falleth in your herte. Dyt ye muſte auiſe you an it ful oſte. For as ye herde to fore the comyn puerbe. whiche is this. he that ſone demeth ſone repenteth. Dyt ye be not alway in lyke dyſpoſicion. For certes ſomtym ſuche thyng as ſemeth that is good for to do. Another tyme it ſemeth to you the contrarpe. And whan ye haue take counceyl in your ſelf and haue demed by good delyberacion ſuche thyng as ſemeth you beſte. Than I counceyl you to kepe it ſecrete. And bewray not your counceyl to any perſone but yf it ſo be þe ye wene ſilently þe through your bewrapeng your condicion ſhal be to you the more prouffitable. For ihuſ ſprak ſaith. nether to thy frende. ne to thy foo diſcouer not thy ſecrete counceyl. ne thy folpe. For they wyl yeue the apdiuice. loſyng & ſupportyng in your preſence. And ſcorne you in your abſence. An other clerke ſayth that ſcarſely ſhalt thou fynde any perſone that may kepe counceyl ſecretely. The boke ſaith whiles þe thou kepeſt thy counceyl in thy herte. thou kepeſt it in thy pryſon. & whan thou wrayeſt hit to any wyght he holdeth the in his ſuare. And therfore it is better to hyde your counceyl in your herte. than praye hym to whom ye haue bewraped your counceyl that he wolde kepe it cloes & ſtylle. For ſeneca ſaith yf it be ſo that thou ne may thy counceyl

hyde how darst thou pray ony other
 wyght to hyde thy counceyl & kepe it
 secrete. But yf thou wene silyrty þ
 thy bewrapping of thy counceyl to a
 persone wyl make thy condicion sion
 ding in the better plyght. than shalt
 thou telle hym thy couceyl as in this
 wyse. first thou shalt make no sen
 blaunce whether the were leuer pces
 of werre or this or that ne shewe him
 not thy wyl. ne thyn entente for truste
 wel that comunly thise counceyl
 lours ben flaterers namely the coun
 ceyllours of grete lordes. for they
 enforce them alway rather to speke
 playsaunt wordes encypryng to the
 lordes luste than wordes that ben tre
 we and prouffyttable. And therfore
 men sayn that the riche man hath sel
 dewhan good counceyl but yf he ha
 ue it of hem self. And after that thou
 shalt considere thy frendes and thyn
 enemyes. & as touchyng thy frendes
 thou shalt consydere whiche of them
 ben moste trewe wysest. most sayth
 ful. oldest and most approued in cou
 ceylling. And of hem shalt thou aye
 thy couceyl as the caas requyret. I
 say first þ ye shal clepe to your coun
 ceyl your frendes þ ben trewe. For sa
 lamon saith right as the herte of a
 man delyteth in sauour that is swete
 Right so the counceyl of trewe fren
 des yueth sweteness th the soule. He
 saith also there may no thyng to bee
 kylrened to a trewe freude. for certes
 gold ne syluer be not so moch worth
 as the good wyl as the trewe frende
 & eke he saith þ a trewe frende is a
 grete defense. who þ it spndeth. cer

tes he spndeth a grete tresour. than
 shal ye eke vnderstonde yf þ your tre
 we frendes ben discrete and wyse for
 the booke saith & ye alwey thy coucil
 of them þ ben wyse & by this same r
 son shalle ye clepe to your couceyl of
 your frendes þ ben of age whiche þ
 haue seyn many thynges & ben ex
 pert in dyuerse thynges. & be appoued
 in couceylling. for the booke saith in
 olde men is the sapience & in longe ti
 me that prudence and iulius sayth. þ
 grete thynges ben not ay accomplys
 shed by strength ne by dyspurtnes of
 body. but by counceyl and by aucto
 rity of persones and by scyence the
 which thre thynges ne be not feble by
 age. but cert. s they enforce and en
 crece day by day. And than shal ye
 kepe this for a generayl rewle firste
 shal ye clepe to your couceyl a fewe
 or your frendes that ben speryal for
 salamon saith Many a frende haue
 thou. but amonge a thousand chese
 the one be thy counceyllour. for alle
 be it so þ thou first telle thy couceyl
 to fewe. Thou maist after telle thy
 ouceyl to mo folke yf it be nede. but
 folke alway þ thy counceyllours haue
 tho thre condicions þ I haue said be
 fore. þ is to saye that they be trewe.
 wyse & of olde experyence. And weyl
 not alway in euery nede by one cou
 ceyllour allone. for somtyme it beho
 ueth to be couceyllid by many. for
 salamon saith. saluacion of thynges
 is there wherebe many couceyllours

Now sithe I haue tolde you of
 whiche folke that ye shold bee coun
 ceyllid. Nowe wyl I telle whiche

counceyl ye shal eschewe. First ye shal eschewe the counceylling of folles. For Salamon sayth take noo counceyl of a fool for he ne can not counceyl but after his luste and hys affection. The booke sayth that the properte of a fool is this. He troweth har me lyghtly of euery wyghte.

And lyghtly troweth al bounte in hym self. ye shal also eschewe the counceylling of flaterars suche as enforce hem rather to prayse your persone by flaterye than to telle you the sothfastenes of thinges. wherfore Tullyus sayth. Amonge al the pestelences that ben in frenship the grettest is flaterye. And therfor it is more nede to eschewe and drede flaterers thā any other peple. The booke sayth thou shalt rather fle drede the swete wordes of flaterers. and prayers than the grete wordes of thy frende þ sayth to the thy sothes. Salamon sayth that the wordes of a flaterer. is a snare to catche Innocentes he sayth also he that sayth to his frende wordes of swetnes and of pleyssaunce setteth a nette before his feet to catche hym and therfore sayth tullius Enclyne not thyn eres to flaterers ne take no counceyl of wordes of flaterie. And caton sayth auyse the wel to eschewe wordes of flaterye. of swetnes and of pleyssaunce. And elze thou shalt eschewe the counceylling of thyn olde enemyes that ben recounceyled. The booke sayth that no wyght retoweth in to the grace of his olde enemyes saufly. And ysoppe sayth Ne truste not to them wyth whom thou hast

had warre or enemyte. ne telle not hē thy counceyl. And senecre telleth the cause why it may not be and sayth where as a grete fyre hath long tyme endured. that there ne dwelleth some vapour of warmnes. And therfore sayth salamon. In thyn olde foo truste thou neuer for truly though thyn enemye be recounceyled and maketh the chere of humylyte and louteth to the wyth his hede. ne truste hym neuer the more. For silyerly he maketh that feyned humylyte more for hys owen prouffyt than for the loue of thyn owen persone. by cause he demeth the to haue victorie ouer his persone by suche fayned contenaunce. The whiche victorie he myght not haue by strif ne warre Peter alfons sayth make no felouship with thyn olde enemyes for yf thou do thy wyl puer ten it to wickrednes. and elze thou must eschewe the counceyl of such þ ben thy seruantes and benen the grete reuerēce. Forpauenture they saye more for drede than for loue. and therfor sayth a philosophre in this wyse. Ther is no wight pfightly trewe to hym þ he sore dredeth. and tullius sayth there is no wight so grete as an emperour that long may endure but yf he hane more loue of his peple thā drede. Thou shalt eschewe the counceyl of folle þ be dronk relewe for they can not counceyl hyde. For Salamon sayth there is no pryuyte where as repugneth drōlienes. ye shal alwaye haue in suspecte suche folle as counceylle you any thyng pryuely and counceylle you the contratyte openly.

Cassiodore saith that it is a maner slepyght to hyndre whan a man sheweth to do one thing openly & wyrteth the contrarpe piously. Thou shalt also haue in suspect the counceylling of wyched folkie. For the booke sayth that the counceyl of wyched folkie is alle waye ful of frau de. And dauid sayth. That blyssful is þe man that hath not folowed the counceyl of wyched folkie. Thou shalt also eschewe the counceylling of yong folkie for her counceyl it not rype.

Dw syre syth I haue shewen wed yow alle this of whiche folkie ye shal take your counceyl and of whiche folkie ye shal eschewe theyr counceyl. Now wol I telle you how ye shal exampne your counceyl. After the doctryne of Tullius in exampnyng than of youre counceyllours. ye shal considere many thynges. Alder first thou shalt consider. that in that thyng that thou art purposed and vpon what thyng thou shal haue counceyl that veray trouthe be sayd and conserued. This is to saie. telle al truly thy tale.

For he that sayth fals. may not well be counceyllid in þe caas of the whiche he lyeth. And after thys consydere thre thynges that accorde to that thou purposyst the first for to do by thy counceyllours yf reson accorde therto. And elce yf thy myght may atteyne therto. And yf the more parte and the better parte of thy counceyllours accorde therto or no Thā shalt thou consydere what thyng shal so

lowe of that counceylling as hate. pees. warre. grace. prouffyt. or damage. and many other thynges. And of al thysse thynges thou shalt consydere of what rote is engendryd the mater of thy counceyl & what stupt it may concerne & engendryn. Thou shalt consydere elce alle the causes from whens they be sprongen And whan ye haue exampned your counceyl as I haue said & whiche parte is the better and more prouffyttable and haue approued by many wyse folkie and olde. Than shalt thou consydere yf thou may performe it & make of hit a good ende for reson wolde not that ony man spold begynne a thing but yf he myght performe it as hym oughte. ne no mā shold take on hym so heuy a charge that he myght not bere it. For the prouerbe saith he þe to moche enbracheth distreyneth lypyl. And caton sayth also assaye to doo suche thynges as thou hast power to do. on lesse þe charge oppresse the to fore. And that the behoueth to weyue that thyng that thou hast begon ne. & yf that thou be in doubte whether thou may performe hit or not These rather to suffre than to begynne. And peter alfons sayth. yf thou haste myght to doo a thyng whiche thou must repete. it is better nay thā ye. This is to saie that it is better to holde thy tonge styll than for to speken Than maist thou vnderstonde by strengter resons. þe yf thou hast power to pforme a werkie. the which thou shalt repente. than it is better that thou suffre than begynne.

Syn they that defenden every wyght to assaye a thing of the whiche he is in doubte. whether he may performe it or noo. And after whan ye haue examyned your counceyl as I haue sayd beforem & knowe wel that ye may performe your empryse. confer me it than sadly til it be at an ende.

¶ Dw it is reson sayd she & n tyme that I shewe you whā and wherfore that ye may chaunge your counceyllours with outen reproof. Sothly a man may chaunge his counceyl or his purpos yf the cause cesseth or whan an other cause begynneth for the lawe vpon thinges that newly betyde behoueth newe counceyl. And Seneca saith yf that thy counceyl come to the eres of wicked men thyn enemyes chaunge thy counceyl. thou mayst also chaunge thy counceyl yf so be that ther bee errour or thou fynd ony other cause harme or dommage may betyde.

Also yf thy counceyl be dishonest or ellis cometh of dishonest cuase chaunge thy counceyl. For the lawe sayth that al bestes that been dyshoneft ben of no valwe. And elre yf so be h it be Inpossyble or may not goodly be performed or lept. take this for a general rewle that every counceyl h is affermed so strongly that it may not be chaunged for no condicion y may betyde I saye that yllre counceyl is wicked.

¶ His mellebeus whā he herd the doctrine of his wyf dame prudence he answerd in

this wyse. Dame sayd he as yet in to this tyme ye haue couenably tauyght me as in general now I shal gouerne me in chesynge & wythholdyng of my counceyllours But now wol d I sayn that ye wol d condescende especial & telle me how lyketh or what semeth you by your counceyllours h we haue chosen in our present nedes.

¶ y lord sayd she I beseeche m you in alle humbleste that ye wyl not wylfully replie ayenst my reson. ne distempre youre herte though I speke thing that you displese for god wote that is not my entente. I speke it for your beste. for your honour & profit elre And sothly I hope that your benygnyte wyl take it i paciēce. that your counceyl as in this cas ne shold not as to speke properly be callyd a counceylling but a monycion or a meuyng folpe in whiche counceyl ye haue erryd in thassemblyng of your counceyllours for ye shold first haue clepyd a fewe folkre to your counceyl. & after h ye myght haue shewed it to moo folkre yf it had be nede. But certes ye haue sodenly cleded to your counceyl a grete multitude of peple ful char geant and ful anoyous for to here

And ye haue erryd for there as ye sholde haue cleded to your counceylle your trewe frendes olde and wyse. ye haue cleded straunge folkre. fals and flaterars and enemyes recounceyllled and folkre that doon now reuerence wythout loue.

The Tale of Chauncer

And also ye haue erryd for ye haue brought wyth you pre. couetyse and hastynes. the whiche thre thinges be contraryous to euery honest counceyl & proffitable. & whiche thre thinges ye haue not amenued ne destroyed nether in your self ne in your counceyllours as ye ought ye haue erryd also for ye haue shewed to your counceyllours your talent & your affection to make warre anon and for to doo vengeance. They haue aspyed by your menyng to what thyng ye be enclyned. & therfor haue they counceylled you rather to your talent thā to your proffyte. ye haue erryd also for you seereth that it suffyseth you to haue be counceylled by thysse counceyllours only & wyth lytyl a dysse. Where as in so grete nede & so hie hit had be necessarye mo counceyllours And more deliberacion to performe your empryse. ye haue erryd also for ye haue not examyned your counceyl in the forsayd mater ne in dewe manere as the caas requireth. ye haue erryd for ye haue made no dyspysion byt wyth your counceyllours. This is to saye Bytwene your frendes & your feyned counceyllours ne ye haue not knowe the wyll of your frendes olde & wyse. But ye haue cast alle her wordes in an hutchepot. & enclyned your herte to the more parte & to the gretter nombre & by you descend. And also ye wote wel that men shul alway fynde a gretter parte of nombre of foolles than of wyse men. And therfore the counceyllers þe been at congregacions & multitude

of folke there as men taken more rewarde to the nombre thā to the sapience of persones. ye see wel þe in suche counceyllinges folles haue the masterye.

Ellebeus answerde agayn
m. I graunte wel I haue erryd

But there as thou hast tolde me here befor þe he is not to blame that chaūgeth his counceyl in certayn caas & for certayn Just causes I am alle redy to chaūge my counceyllours right as thou list & as thou wylt deuyse. the prouerbe sayth þe for to doo synne is mannysshe. but certes for to pseuere long in synne it is a werke of the deuyll.

This sentence answerd dazt me prudence & said examyne your counceyl & lete vs se whiche of them haue spolen most resonable & taught you best counceyl. & for as moche as the examinacion is necessarye late vs begyn at surgens & at physiciens þe first speken in this matere. I say you þe the surgens & the physiciens haue said you discretly as they ought. For they said ful wysely þe to the office of hem hit appertayneth to do to euery wyght honour & prouffit & no wyght to ennoye. & after theyr craft do grete diligēce vnto the cure of hem the whiche they haue in gouernance. & syr right as they haue answerd wysely & discretely. right so I rede you þe ye be hyghly & souerainly gwerdonned for her noble speche. & eke for they shold do the more entetif besynes in the curacion of youre doughter. for alle be it so þe they be your frendes Therfor shal ye not suffre þe they shal serue you for nought

But ye ought to gouerne hem ⁊ she we hem largesse. And as touchyng that the physiciens encrepyd in thys cas that is to say þ in maladies one contrarpe is warysshed by another contrarpe I wold sayn knowe how ye vnderstonde that teyte ⁊ what is your sentence. Certes sayd mellebeus I vnderstonde that in this wyse That right as they haue doon me a contrarpeous right. ryght so shold I do hem another. For right as they haue venged hem on me ⁊ doon me wronge. right so shold I venge me on hem ⁊ do hem wronge and than haue I cured one contrarpe by another contrarpe Lo said dame prudence how lightly is euery mā enclyned to do his owen desir ⁊ his owen plesācētēs said she the wordes of þ physiciēs shold not be vnderstōde in this wyse for certes wyckrednes is not contrarious to wyckrednes. ne vengeance to vengeance no wrong to wrong but eueriche of them encrepyth ⁊ aggedyþ other But certes the wordes of the physiciens shold be vnderstonde i this wise. for good ⁊ wyckrednes be two contrarpeous. and pees ⁊ warre. vengeauce ⁊ suffrance and discorde. ⁊ accorde. and many other thinges. But certes wyckrednesse shal be warysshed by goodnes. And discorde by accorde. ⁊ warre by pees. ⁊ so forth by other thinges. ⁊ herto accordeth scint Poule thapostle in many places. He saith yelden of harme to harme ne wyckred speche to wyckred speche but do wel to hym that doth the harme and blyffe hym that saith the harme.

And in many other places he saith ⁊ amonesteth pees and accorde. But now wold I speke to you of the counceyl whiche þ was yeuue to you by the men of lawe and wyse folke that saiden alle by one accorde as ye haue herde. that ouer all thinges ye shold doo diligence to kepe your persone ⁊ to warnstowe your hous And sayden also þ in this caas ye ought for to werke ful aduysedly ⁊ wyth grete discretion ⁊ deliberacon And spre as to the first poynte that toucheth the keepyng of your person ye shal vnderstonde that he þ hath warre Shalle euermore deuoutly ⁊ mekely besekien ⁊ prayen before alle thinges Ihesu cryste of his mercy þ he wol haue hym in his protection ⁊ be his souerayn helper at his nede. For certes in thys werke there is no wyght that may be counceylled ne kepte sufficiētly wythout the keepyng of our lord Ihesu cryste. To this entente accordeth the prophete dauid þ saith yf god ne kepe the Lyte. in ydel walreth he that kepeth it. Now spre than shul ye commytte the keepyng of your persone to you trewe stendes that ben y prouyd and knowen And of them shall ye aye helpe your persone to kepe. For Laton saith yf thow haue nede of helpe aye it of thi frende. And after this than shalle ye kepe you from al straunge folkes ⁊ fro lyes and haue alleway in suspecte her companye. For Peter alfons sayth ne take no companye by the waye of stranger men.

But yf it so be þ̄ thou haue knowen hem before tyme And yf so be that ye haue not knowen hem. And wyl nedes fal in thy companye perauentre wythout thy assente. enquire then as subtilly as thou canst or mayst of his conuersacion ⁊ of his lyf before. And sayne thy way ⁊ say that thou wolt go thyder as thou wolt not go And yf he bere a spere holde the on the right syde. And yf he bere a swerde holde the liste syde And after thus than shal ye lrepe yow wylsely from al suche maner peple as I haue said before ⁊ hem and her counceple eschewe. And after this than shal ye lrepe yow in suche maner þ̄ for ony presumpcyon of your strengthe. that ye despise ne attempte not the might of your aduersarye. And thus beware þ̄ ye lette not the lrepyng of your persone for ony presumption. For euery wyse man dredeth his enemye. And salomon sayth wylful is he þ̄ of noo thing hath drede. For certes he that thorough the hardyunes of his herte or of hym self hath to grete presumpcyon hym shal euyl betyde. than shal yow cuer more contrewayte enbusshementis in speciall. For senekle sayth the wyse mā that dredeth harmes eschewe. harmes ne he fallith no peill þ̄ perille eschewith. ⁊ al be it so þ̄ thou seme þ̄ thou be in siler place. yet shalt thou do al way dilygence in lrepyng of thy persone not only from thy gretest enemyes but from the leste enemye: Dupde sayth that the ltyl wesyf wold sle a grete bolle ⁊ the grete herte. And the boole sayth. That a ly

tyl thorne may pryche the lrynge sulfore. And an houde wyl sle the wylle bore but neuertheles I saye not that thou shalt be so cowarde that thou doubt. where as is no drede. The boole sayth that som folle haue grete lust to desceyue but yet they dreden hem to be desceyued. thou shalt drede to be enpoysoned. and lrepe the from the companye of scorners For the boole sayth scornes make no companye. But flee her wordes as benym. Now as to the secounde poynt where as your wyse councepleours concepled yow to warnstoure your hous wyth grete dyligence I wold sayn knowe how that ye vnderstonde the wordes ⁊ what is the sentence Wellicbeus answerd ⁊ sayd Certes I vnderstonde it in this wyse that I shalle warnstoure my hous wyth toures suche as be castellys ⁊ other maner edyfices wyth armure and other maner attylerye by suche thinges whiche I may my persone ⁊ my hous so desede þ̄ my enemys shal be in drede my hous for to approche.

¶ This sentence answerde at non prudence. warnstouryng sayth she of grete towres ⁊ edyfices wyth grete costages ⁊ grete trauayll. And whan that they be accomplysshed yet be they not worth a strawe. But yf they ben defended by trewe frendes that ben olde and wyse. And vnderstonde wel that the gretest and strongest garyson that a riche man may haue as well to lrepe his persone as his good. is that he be belouyd wyth his subgettys and

For thus saith tulus⁹ þ there is a ma-
 ner garison þ no mā may vainquis
 she ne discōfite. ⁊ þ is a lord to be be-
 louyd of his cytesepns ⁊ of his peple
 Now sʒr as to your thirde popnt
 where as your wyse ⁊ olde couceyl-
 lours sayd þ ye ne ought not sodenli
 ne hastely to procede in this nede but
 þ ye oughten to purueye ⁊ apparay-
 len in this caas wyth grete diligence
 ⁊ grete deliberacion truly I trowe
 they sayden right wysely ⁊ right so. h
 For tulus⁹ saith in euery nede er thou
 begynne yet apparayl the wyth gre-
 te diligence thā in vengeāce takyng
 in warre in bataile ⁊ i warnstoring
 er thou begynne I rede þ thou appa-
 reyle the therto ⁊ do it wyth grete de-
 liberacion For tulus⁹ saith þ long ap-
 parayling before the bateyl maketh
 short victorie And casspodie saith þ
 the garyson is the stronger whan it
 is longe tyme aduysed But now sa-
 te vs spelie of the couceyl þ was ac-
 corded by your neyghebouris suche
 as don you reuerence wythouten lo-
 ue. your olde enemyes reconspylid.
 your flaterers þ couceyl you certayn
 thinges openly. And pryuelly couceyl
 you the contrarpe. The yong folke þ
 counceylle you to auenge you ⁊ ma-
 ke warre anon. Certes sʒr as I ha-
 ue sayde before. ye haue gretely errid
 to haue cleped suche maner of folke
 to your couceyl. which couceyllours
 ben ynough repreynd aforesayd by
 reason. But neuertheles late vs nou
 descende to the speycall. ye shal first
 procede after the doctrine of tulus.
 Certes the trouthe of this matere or

of this couceyl nedeth not dyligently
 tenquyre. For it is wyft witt whiche
 they be þ haue don to you this tres-
 paas ⁊ bylonye and how many tres-
 passours. ⁊ in what maner þ they ha-
 ue do to you alle this wronge ⁊ alle
 this bylonye. And after this shal ye
 exampne the s. cond condicion. whi-
 che þ the same tulus addeth in thys
 same mater. For Tulus putteth a
 thung whiche þ he calleth cōsenting.
 this is to say who ben they ⁊ whiche
 bey they ⁊ how many consenting to
 this couceyl in thy wylfulnes to doo
 hasty vengeāce. And lete cōsider. al-
 so who be they ⁊ how many be they
 þ cōsenteden to your aduersaryes. ⁊
 reites as to the first popnt it is well
 knownen whiche folke they be that cō-
 sented to your hasty wylfulnes. For
 certes alle tho that counceylled you
 to make sodeyn warre be not your
 frendes Lete vs now consydere whi-
 che be they þ ye holdē so gretely your
 frendes as to your persone. For al be
 it so þ ye be so myghty ⁊ riche Certes
 ye be but allone. For ye haue no chil-
 de but a daughter. Ne ye haue noo
 brethern ne cosyns Germans ne no-
 ne other nyghe kynrede. wherfor þ
 your enemyes for drede sholde stynte
 to plete with you or distroyen your
 persone. ye know also þ your ryches
 must be despended in dyuerse par-
 tes ⁊ whan þ euery wyght hath hys
 parte they ne wyl take but lypyl re-
 warde to vengen your deth.
 But youre nemies ben thre and they
 haue many chyldren. Brethern

Cosyns. And other nyghe lynrede.
 And though so were that thou haddest
 slain two or thre of them. yet dwellen
 there ynough to wrelen her deth
 and to see thy persone. And though
 so be that youre lynrede be more
 splier and stedfast than the lynrede
 of your aduersaryes. yet neuer theles
 youre lynrede nys but after lynrede
 they be but lytyl subget to you.
 And the lynrede of youre enemyes
 ben nyghe sybbe to them. And certes
 as in that her condycion is better than
 yours. Than lete vs considere also
 pf that the counceyl of hem that
 conseil you to take sodeyn vengeance
 wheter it accord to reson or noo.
 And certes ye know wel nay for
 as be right or reason there may
 no man take vengeance on no wyght
 but the Juge that hath the Jurisdiction
 of it. whan it is graunted hym to
 take that vengeance hastily or at
 temperatly as the lawe requirerth.
 And yet more ouer of that word that
 Tullyus sayth and cieped cōcentyng
 thou shalt consydere pf thy myght
 & thy power may consente and suffyse
 to thy wyllfulnes and to thy couceyls
 sours. & ces thou maist wel say nay
 for silyerly as for to speke properly
 we may doo no thing but only suche
 thinges as we may do rightfully
 And certes thou mayst rightfully take
 vengeance. as of your propre auctorite.
 Than may ye se that your power
 ne consenteth ne accordeth your
 wyllfulnes. Lete vs examyne the
 thyrd poynt that tullyus clepeth con-

sequent. thou vnderstonde þ the vengeance
 that thou purposest to take is consequent.
 And therfor foloweth a nother
 vengeance peryl and warre and other
 dommages wythout nō bre of whiche
 we be not warre as at this tyme.
 and as touchyng the fourthe parte
 þ tullyus clepeth engendyng Thou
 shalt consydere þ this wrong whiche
 is don to the. is engendryd of the
 hate of thy enemyes & of vengeance
 takyng vpon hem that wold engendre
 a nother vengeance & moche sorowe
 and wastynge of riches as I sayd
 before. Now syre as to the fyfthe
 poynt. whiche that tullyus clepeth
 causes whiche is the last poynt
 thou shalt vnderstonde þ ille wrong
 that thou hast receyued hath certain
 causes whiche that clerkes clepen
 or ryens and effyience & causa longin-
 qua and causa proppinqua. This is
 to saye the fer cause & the nygh cause
 The fer cause is alle myghty god þ
 is cause of alle thynges. The neer
 cause is thy thre enemyes. The cause
 acyidental was hate. The cause ma-
 teryalle is the spue woundes of thy
 doughter. The cause formal is the
 cause of her worchyng þ brougten
 ladders and clomben in at the wyndowes.
 These cause synal was to sle thy
 doughter it letted not in as moche
 as in hem was. But for to speke
 of this synal cause as what ende
 they shal come or what shal synally
 betyde of hem in this caas Ne can
 I not deme but by comectyng &
 supposyng for we shal suppose that

They shal come to a wycked ende. By
 cause that the boke of the decrees saith
 Sade or wyth grete payn be causes
 brought to a good ende. whan they
 be bodily begonne. Now spre pf men
 wold aye me why that god suffreth
 men to do this Bylouye certes I can
 not wel answer as for no sothfastnes
 for thapostle sayth. That the scienc
 ce and the Jugementys of our lord
 god almyghty been ful depe. There
 may no man comprehende ne serche
 hem suffciently. Neuertheles by cer
 tain presumptuous & coniectyng I
 holde and beleue that wyght that is
 ful of Justice and rightfulness hath
 suffryd this to betyde By Just cause
 & resonable. Thy name is mellebee.
 This is to saye a mā that dryueth
 hony. thou hast droue so moche ho
 ny of swete temporel riches and desy
 ces of honour of this worlde þ thou
 art droue & hast forgotten Ihu criste
 thy creatour Thow ne hast doon to
 hym suche honour and reuerence as
 thou oughtest. Ne thou ne hast take
 hepe of the wordes of Dydde þ saith
 Under the hony of the goodes of the
 body is hyd venym that sleth the sou
 le. And salamon saith pf thou hast
 founde hony ete of it that suffyseth.
 For pf thou ete of it out of mesure.
 thou shalt spewe. and be nedy and
 poure. and parauenture Crist hath
 the in de spyte. & hath torneth a way
 fro the his face and his misericorde.
 And so he hath suffrid that thou hast
 be punysshed in the maner that how
 hast trespaced. Thow hast don syn
 ne agayn our lord Ihesu criste. For

certes the thre enemyes of manlyne
 de that is to saye the fleesse the fende
 and the world thou hast suffryd hem
 for to entre in to the herte wylfullye
 by the wyndowes of thy body. And
 hast not defendeth thy self suffcient
 ly agaynst her assautes & her temp
 tacions. so that they haue wounded
 the soule in fyue places that is to sa
 ye the dedely synnes that been entred
 in to thy herte be the fyue wyttes.
 And in this maner our lord ihu crist
 hath suffred that thy thre enemyes be
 entryd in to thy hous by the wyndo
 wes. And haue wounded thy dough
 ter in the maner asofsayd.

Certes sayd Mellebe I see
 c Wel þ ye enforce yow my
 syl by wordes to ouerco
 me me in suche maner as I shal not
 venge me of myn enemyes. shewyng
 methe peryl & the euyl that myght be
 falle of this vengeaunce. But who
 so wold consydere in alle vengeaun
 ces the peril and the euyl that myght
 sewe of vengeaunce takyng a man
 wold neuer take vengeaunce. and þ
 were harme for by vengeaunce ta
 kyng ben wycked men descurd fro
 the good men. And they that haue
 wyl to do wyckednes restreyne her
 wycked purpoos whan they see the
 punysshing and the chastysing of the
 trespassours And yet saye I more. þ
 right as by synnguler presumpcyon
 he synneth in takyng vengeaunce of
 a nother man Right soo synneth the
 Iuge pf he take not & doo vengean
 ce on hem that it haue deseruid.

conten...

Seneke saith thus. That mayster is good he sayth that repreuyth shrewes. And casspodre sayth a man die deth to doo outragpously whan he woot and knoweth that it dyspleaseth the Juges and soueraynes. and another sayth The Juge that dredeth to doo right maketh shrewes. & saint poule thapostle sayth how he wryteth to the romayns that the Juges bere not the spere wythout cause. But they bere it to ponysshe the shrewes and mysdoers. And for to defenden the good men. yf ye wyl take vengeance on your ennyes ye shall retourne and haue your cours to the Juge that hath the Jurysdiction vpon hem and ye shal punyssh hem as the lawe ayed & requyrieth.

Sayd Ellebe this vengeance lyketh me no thyng.

I bethynke me now & take hede how that fortune hath norisshyd me fro my chyldehode and holpe me to passe many a straunge paas. Now wol I assaye in her trowynge wyth goddes helpe that shal me saue for to venge. certes sayd prudence yf ye wyl werke by my couceyl ye shal not assaye fortune by no waye. ne ye shalle not lene ne borwe vnto her after the worde of seneke. for thynge that ben folysly don and that be doon in hope of fortune shall neuer come to good ende. And as to the same seneke sayth the more clere and the more shynnyng that fortune is. the more brotyl. and the sonner broken she is.

Truste ye

not in her. for there nys no stedfastnes ne stablenes in her. for whan thou trowest to be moste sure and sykter of her. She wyl faylle and deceyue the. And where as ye sayn þ fortune hath norysshid you in youre chyldehode. I say that there is so mykyl the lasse truste in your witte. for seneke sayth what man that is norysshid by fortune she makyth hym a fool. Now sythen ye despyren & aye vengeance. And the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and before the Juge lyketh not yow. And the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perylous and vncertayn. than haue ye no remedye but for to haue your recours vnto the souerayn Juge that vengeyth al vylonyes & wronges. and he shal venge yow after þ hym self wyntnesseth wher as he saith. leue ye the vengeance vnto me and I shalle do hit.

Ellebe answerd yf I venge me not of the vylonye þ men haue don vnto me I sommone and warne hem that haue don to me this vylonye and al othre to doo me vylonye. for it is wryton yf thou takest no vengeance of a old vylonye. thou somonest thy aduersarye to do the a newe vylonye. Also for my suffraunce men wolde doo me so grete vylonye þ I myght not bere it ne susteyne it. & than shold I be put & holde ouer lowe. for men sayn in mykyl suffring shal many thynges falle vnto the whiche thou ne shal now suffre.

B ii

and Jugement & in the myght and power of his enemyes. For salamoſ sayth Belue me and yeue credence to that I ſhal ſaye. ne yeue neuer the power ne gouernaunce of thy gooddes. to the ſone. to thy wyf. to thy frende ne to thy broder. ne yeue thou myght ne mayſtrye ouer thy body whi leſt thou lyueſt. Now ſyth that he defendeth that a man ſhold not yeue to his broder ne to his frende the myght of his body by a ſtrenger reſon he defendeth a man to yeue hym to his enemye And neuertheles I couceyl you þe ye myſtruſt not my lord. for I wote wel and knowe verreyly that he is debonayr. meke. large and curteys and nothyng deſyrous ne couetous of good ne riches. for ther is no thyng in this worlde þe he deſyret more than worſhip and honour.

Forthermore I knowe and am full ſure that he nothing ſhal doo in this dede wythout my counceyl. And I ſhal ſo werke in this caſ that by the grace of our lord god ye ſhal be recounceyllid vnto vs. Than ſayd they wyth one voys. worſhipful ſayd we put vs & our goodes in youre wyll and diſpoſicion alle fully. And be redy for to come what day that it lyketh to your nobleſſe to aſſygne vs for to make our obligations & bondes alſo ſtronge as it ſhal lyketh vnto your goodnes that we mowe fulfylle the wyll of pow & of my lord Wellebee. whan dame prudence had herd the answers of thyſe men. She bad hem retorne pryuelly. And ſhe retorned agrayn to her lord mellebe & tolde

de hym how ſhe ſonde his aduerſaryes ful repentant knowlechyng ful lowly her ſynnes and treſpaas and how that they were redy to ſuffre all payne requyryng hym of mercy and pyte. Than ſayd mellebe he is well worthy to haue pardon and foryeuenes that excuſeth hym not of his ſynne. But knowlecheth and repenteth hym ayyng Indulgence for his ſynne. Senekke ſayth There is the remedyſſyon and foryeuenes. for the confeſſion is nyghbour to Innocence. And therfor I aſſente and confor me to haue pees. But it is good that we doo not wythout the wyll of oure frendes.

Than was Prudence ryght glad & Joyeful and ſayde certes ſyre ye haue wel and goodly answerde. for right as by the counceyl aſſente & helpe of youre frendes ye haue ſtryd to doo venge you and make warre ryght ſo wythouten her counceyl ſhal ye not acorde you ne haue pees wyth youre aduerſaryes. for the lawe ſayth there is no thyng ſoo good by waye of kynde as a thyng to be vnboude by hym that it was boude. And than dame Prudence wythout delaye or taryeng ſent anon her meſſagers for her kyn and her olde frendes whiche were trewe and wyſe. And tolde hem by ordre in preſence of mellebe al this mater as is aboue expreſſyd and declared. And prayed hem that they wolde ſaye her aduys and counceylle what were beſte to doo in this nede. And whan

We thynke and consydere þ we haue deserued to haue them. .a. saynt Gregoꝝ sayth. that whan a man consydeteth wel the nombre of his defaultes and synnes. the paynes and tribulacions that he suffreth semen the lasse to hym. .a. in as moche as hym thynketh his synnes more heuy and greuous in so moche semeth his payne more lyghter and esyer to hym.

Also ye oughten to enclpne and boꝝ we your herte to take the pacience of our lord Ihu cryste as sayth saynt Peter in his eppistles. Ihesu Cryste he sayth that suffred for vs and pas ensample to euery man to folowe .a. sue hym. for he dyd neuer synne. He neuer cam ther out of his mouth by leynes worde: whan men cursid hym he cursed hem not. And whan men beten hym. he manasced hem not. al. so the grete pacience þ sayntes whiche that ben in paradyse haue had in tribulacions that they haue suffred wythouten her deserte or gylte ought moche styrre your pacience. For ye shold enforce you to haue pacience.

Consyderyng the tribulacions of this world that lytyl whyle enduren and sone passyn and goon. and the Joye that a man seketh by pacience in tribulacions is perdurable. After that the Apocalyps sayth in his epistle. The ioye of god he sayth is perdurable last is to saue euerlastyng. also tro we ye wel and eke beleue stedfast by that he is not wel norissyd ne a el taught that wyl not haue pacience. ne wyl not receyue pacience. for sa

lamen sayth That the doctryne of a man and the wytte is knowen by pacience. And in another place he sayth þ he that is pacyet gouerneth hym by grete in prudence. .a. the same Salamon sayth The angry and the wrathfulman maketh noyses. And the patient man atempteth hym .a. styllteth hym. he sayth also. it is more worth to be patient thennefor to be right stronge. And he that may haue the lordship of his owen hert is more to prayse than by his force or siren the taketh grete cytees. And therfore saith saint Jame in his epistle That pacience is a grete vertue of perfecion. Certes sayd Wellebec I graunte dame Prudence that pacience is a grete vertu of perfection.

But euery man may not haue the perfecion that ye seke. ne I am none of þ nombre of right perfight men. For my herte may neuer be in pees vnto the tyme that it be vengyd .a. al be it soo that it was grete peryl to myn enemyes to doo me a vylonpe in takyng vengeance vpon me: yet toke they no hede of the paryl but suffylled their wycked wyl and corage.

And therfor me thynketh men ought not to repreue me. though I put me in a lytyl paryl for to venge me. And though I do a grete exresse. That is to saue that I a venge one outrage by a nother.

Sayde dame prudence ye
a say your wysse as you lyketh
keth But in no caas of the

world of a man shold not do outrage ne epyesse for to venge hym. For casspodre saith that as euyl doth he that a Vengeth hym by outrage as he that doth the outrage. And therfor ye shal venge yow after the ordie of right. þ is to say by the lawe, and not by epyesse ne by outrage ⁊ also if ye wil venge yow of the outrage of poure aduersaries in oþer maner. ye sunne. ⁊ therfor sayth seneke þ a mā shal neu vengesshrewdnes by shrewdnes and yf that ye sape that right ayed a man to defende byolence by byolence. and fyghtyng by fyghtyng. Lettes ye saith soth. whan the defence is doon anon wythouten interual or wythouten taryng or delay for to defende hym and not for to venge hym. And yet behoueth that a man put suche temperaunce in his defence that men haue no cause ne mater to reproche hym that defendeth hym of outrage or epyesse. For ellys were it agayn reson. Parde ye knowe wel that ye make no defence as nou for to defende yow. but for to venge yow. And so sueth it that ye haue no wyl to do your wyl attemperatly. And therfor me thynketh that patience is good. For salamon sayth. þ he that is not pacient shal haue grete harme.

Ertes said mellebe I graunte yow whan a man is in pacient and wroth of that whiche touched hym not ⁊ that apperteyneth not to hym. though it harme hym it is no wonder. For the lawe saith that he is culpable that enterneth or medleth of thyng that

apperteyneth not to hym. And salamon saith. That he that enterneth hym of the noyse of stryf of another man. Is lyke to hym that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. For right as he that taketh a strange hound by the eerys. he is otherwhyle biten with the hound. Ryght in the same wyse. it is reson that he haue harme that by his Inpacience medlyth hym of the noyse of another mā where as it apperteyneth not to hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede that is to say my grief and my desire toucheth me ryght nygh. and therfore though I be wrothe and Inpacient it is noo metuayl. And sayyng your grace I can not see that I shold gretely harme me though I toke vengeance. For I am riche ⁊ more myghty than myn enemyes ben and it is wel known that by money and hauyng grete poyssyons ben al thynges of this world gouerned. And also salamon sayth that alle thyse thynges obeyen to money. whan prudence had herde her husband a daunte hym of his richesse and of his money dyspraying the power of his enemyes she spak and sayd in this wyse. certes dere syr I graunte yow that ye be riche and mighty. And that richesles ben good to hem that haue gotten hem wel and that wel can vse them. for ryght as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule. nomore may the lyf without temporel goodes And by richesse may a man gete hym grete frendes. and therfore sayth pamphylles yf an ertes daughter be ryche he

sayth she may these of a thousand men whom she wyl take to her husband. For of a thousand men one wyl not forsake her. And this pamphyles sayth also. yf that thou be ryght happy that is to saye yf thou be ryche thou shalt fynde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes. And yf thy fortune chaunge farewell frenshipp and felawshipp for thou shalt be alone wythout ony companye. but yf it be the companye of poure folke. & yett saith this pamphyles more ouer that they that ben bonde and thrall of synage shal be made worthy and noble by richesse. And right so as by richesse there comen many goodes. right so by pouerte there comen many harmes and euyllys. And therfor clepeth casspodre pouerte the moder of rupne that is to saye the moder of ouerthrowyng or of fallyng down. And therfore sayth Peter alfons one of the gretest aduersyteys of thys world is whan a freman of kynde or of byrthe is constrayned by pouerte to ete the almesse of his enemye. And the same sayth Innocence in one of his bookes that sorowful and myshappy is the condycion of a poure beggar. For yf he aye not his meete. he dyeth for hongre & yf he aye he dyeth for shame. and algate necessitye constreyneth hym to aye. And therfor sayth salamon That better it is to dye than to haue suche pouerte. And as the same Salamon sayth better it is to dye a bytter deth than to lyue suche a lyf. By these reasons þ

I haue sayd vnto you and by many other that I coude say I graunte that richesse ben good to them that gete hem wel and to tho that vse wel thys richesse. And therfor wyl I shewe you. how ye shal behaue you in gadryng of your richesse. & in what maner ye shal vse them. fyrst ye shal gete hem wythouten grete desyre by good leyzer so kyngly and not ouer hastely. for a man that is to desyryng in getyng ryches habouideth hym first to thefte and to alle other mysrewles. And therfor sayth salamon he that hasteth hym to besily to waye riche he shal be none Innocent he sayth also that the riches that hastely cometh to a man. soon and hastely goth and passeth from a man. But that riches that cometh lytyl & lytyl weyit alway and myltyplyeth. And therfor ye shalle gete ryches by your wytte and by your traueyl vnto your prouffyt. And that wythouten wrong or harme doyng to ony other persone. For the lawe saith ther maketh no man hym self riche yf he doo harme to another wyght. This is to saye that nature defendeth and forbedeth by ryght that no man make hym riche vnto the harme of another persone. And tulyus sayth that no sorowe ne dred of dethe ne of thynge that may befall vnto a man is so moche agayn nature as a man to encrece his owen prouffit to the harme of another man. & though þ grete and myghty men gofe ryches more lyghtly than thou. yett shalt thou

alle wyse fle ydlenes For salamon sayth That he that traueleth in ydlenes tched a man to doo many euylles. And the same salamon sayth. he that traueyleth and bespeth hym to tulle his londe shal ete brede. And he that is ydle and casteth hym to noo besynes ne occupacion shal falle in to pouerte ⁊ dye for huingre And he þ is ydle ⁊ slowe can neuer fynde couenable tyme for to doo his prouffyt. For ther is a bersepar sayth. that the ydle man excuseth hym in wynter by cause of the grete colde ⁊ in sommer by encheson of hete. For thysse causes sayth caton waketh ⁊ endyeth you not ouer mykyl to slepe. For ouer moche reke nor ysshith and causeth many byces. ⁊ therfor sayth Seruit Jerome doth some good dedes þ the deuyl whiche þ is your enemye fynd you not vnocupped. For the deuyl taketh not lyghtly to his worchynge suche as he fyndeth occupied in good werke. Than thus in getyng of richesse ye must flee ydlenes And after ward ye shal vse the riches whiche ye haue gotten by your wytte ⁊ by your trayueyl in suche maner þ men hold you not to scarce ne to sparing ne to fool large that is to saye ouer large a spender. For right as men blame an auaricious man by cause of his scarsenes ⁊ chyncerye. in the same wyse is he to blame þ spendeth ouer largely. And therfor caton saith vse thy ryches that thou hast gotten in suche maner as men haue no mater ne cause to say ne cal

le the neyther wretche ne chynche. for it is a grete shame to a man to haue a poure herte ⁊ a riche purs. he saith also the goodes that thou hast gotten vse them by mesure þ is to say spend them mesurably for they that solyly spende ⁊ wasten the goodes that they haue. whan they haue nomore pryce of theyr owen. they shapen them to take the goodes of other me I say than that ye shal flee auarycce vsyng your rychesse in suche maner that men saye not that youre rychesse is deuoured. But that ye haue them in your myght ⁊ in your weldyng. for the wyse man repreueth the auaricious man and sayth thus in two versys. wherto and why burpeth a man his owen goodes by his grete auarycce ⁊ knoweth wel þ nedes must he die for deth is the ende of eueryman as in this present lyf. ⁊ for what cause ⁊ encheson Joyneþ or knyttheth he hym so fast to his godes þ al his wyttes mo we not deffeuere ne departe hym from his goodes. And knoweth wel or owght to knowe that whan he is dede he shal nothyng bere wyth hym out of this world. And therfor sayth saint Augustyn. That the auaricious man is lykened vnto helle. þ the more it swolowe the more hit desyret to swolowe and to deuoure. And as wel as ye wold eschew to be called an auaricious man or a chynche as wel shold ye kepe you ⁊ gouerne you in suche wyse that man not be ydle. But shewe to doo thy prouffyt. For thou shalt in

stepe þow not foolARGE.

Therfor sayth Tulyus the goodes be opened by pyte and by debonaryte that is to saye to geue hym parte þe haue grete nede. Ne thy goodes shold not be so open to be euery mannes goodes. Afterward in geting of your rycheffe and vsing hem ye shal alleway haue thre thinges in your herte. That is to saye our lord god, goode consience, and god name. First ye shal haue god in your herte. And for no ryches ye shal doo no thyng whiche may in ony maner wyse dysplesa god that is our creatour and maker.

After the word of Salamon, it is better to haue a lytyl good wyth the loue of god than for to haue moche golde ond tresour and to lese the loue of his lord god. And the pphete saith that better it is to be a good man & haue lytyl good and tresour than to be holde a shrewe and haue grete rycheffe. And yet say I furthermore þe ye shal alway do your besynes to gete þow ryches so þe ye gete them wyth good consience. And the appostle sayth that there ups nothyng in this world of whiche we shal haue so grete Joye as whan our consience berith vs good wytnes. And the wyse man sayth that the substauce of a man is ful good whan spme is not in mannes concience. Afterward in geting of your rycheffe and in vsing of them ye must haue grete besynes and dyligence that your good name be alway kept and conserued. For Salamon sayth That better is and

more it auayleth a man for to haue a good name than for to haue many ryches. And therfor he saith in another place, doo grete dyligence in kepnyng of thy frende and in kepnyng of thy good name. For it shal lenger abyde wyth the than ony other tresour be it neuer so precious & certes he shold not be called a gentylman þe after god and good concience alle thinges lest ne doth to kepe his good name. And Casspodre sayth that hit is synne of a gentylle herte whan a man loueth and desyret to haue a good name. And therfore saith saint Augustyn, that ther be two thynges that be necessarye and needeful, that is good consience and good loos.

And he that trusteth hym so mykyl in his good consience that he despyseth and setteth at nought his good name or loos he doth not well.

For he that reketh not to kepe his good name nys but a cruel choile.

Spere now haue I shewed þow how ye shold do in getnyng of ryches and how ye sholde vse hem.

And I see wel that for the trust that ye haue in your ryches ye wolde meue warre and bataylle. I counceylle þow that ye begyn no warre in truste of your riches. For they suffyse not warres to mayntene, & therfor sayth a phylosophre that man that desyret algate & wyl haue warre, shal neu haue suffysaunce for the ryche þe he is the gretter dyspence muste he of thyn hous ne shold not be hyd ne kepte so cloos but that they mygght

make yf he wyl haue worship and
 wyctorye. And salamon sayth That
 the grete ryches þ a mā hath the more
 dyspence he hath And therfore al be
 it so that by fortune a ryches ye may
 haue many folke. yet behoueth it not
 ue it is not good to begynne warre.
 where that ye may haue in other ma
 ner pees vnto your worship a prouf
 fyt . for the victories that ben of ba
 taylor in this world. ben not in grete
 nombre and multytude of people ne
 in vertu of man . But it lyeth in the
 wyl and in the hand of our lord ihū
 god almyghty. And therfor Judas
 machabe which that was goddes
 knyghte. whā he shold fyght agains
 te hys aduersaries that had a gret
 ter nombre and gretter multytude
 of people and stronger than was the
 peple of Machabee. yet he recomfor
 ted his lytyl peple and sayd ryght in
 this wyse. Also lyghtly sayd he may
 our lord god yeue vycorye to a fewe
 folke as to many folke. for the vic
 toue of a batayll cometh not by a gre
 te nombre of people but hit cometh
 from our lord god of heuen. And
 dere syt for as moche as there is noo
 man certayn that he be worthy that
 god wyl yeue hym vycorye or not .
 Salamon saith Therfor euery man
 shold gretely drede warrys to begyn
 ne and by cause that in batayll falle
 many perylls. And happeth other
 whyle þ also sone is a grete mā slain
 as a lytyl man And as is wyton in
 the second booke of knynges. The des
 des of batayll been venturous and

nothyng certayn. for as lyghtly as
 one hurte wyth a spere as a nother
 And forether is grete payrl in warre
 therfor shold a man eschewe and fle
 warre in as mykel as a man may
 goodly. for salamon sayth he that
 louyth payrl shal fail in payrl: After
 that dame prudence had spoken in
 this mater Wellebee answerde and
 said I se wel dame prudence that by
 sayr wordes a by youre resons that
 ye haue shewed me . that warre ly
 keth yow nothyng . but I haue not
 herde yet in this counceyle. how I
 shalle doo in this nede . Certes sayde
 she I counceyl yow that ye accorde
 wyth your aduersaries that ye haue
 pees wyth them for saint iame saith
 in his epystles. That by accorde and
 pees the smale ryches waye grete .
 And by debate and dyscorde the gre
 te richesse fallen down and fayllen .

And ye knowe wel that one of the
 gretest and most souerayn thyng þ
 is in this world is vnyte a pees. and
 therfor sayth our lorde ihū crist to
 his appostles in this wyse wel hap
 py and blyssid be tho that louen and
 purchacen pees. for they be called
 chyldren of god A sayd mellebee now
 see I wel þ ye loue not myn honoure
 ne worship. ye knowen that myn ad
 uersaries haue begonne this debate
 And ye see wel that they ne requyre
 ne praye me of pees ne they aye not
 to be reconceylled wold ye than that
 I goo a meke me a obeye me vnto
 hem a crye hem mercy forsothe þ we
 re not my worshyp. for ryght as

The Tale of Chaucer

men sayn ouergrete hublencen engendryth grete dyspraysynge so shold it fare by me in doyng this grete humilte or mekenes. Than began prudence to make semblaunte of wrath and sayd syr saue your grace. I loue your honour and your prouffight as I doo myn owen and euer haue doo neyther ye ne none oher sawe neuer the contrarye. and yet yf I had sayd that ye sholde haue purchaced your pees and the recounsilacion I ne had my kynscaped ne sayd a mys. For the wyse man sayth. The dyssencion begynneth by a nother man. And the recouncepling by him self begynneth. And the prophete sayth flee shrewdenes and doo goodnes seke pees and folowe it in as my kyn as i the is. yet say I not þe shal rather pursiwe to your aduersaries for pees. than theif shal to you. For I knowe wel ynought that ye be so harde of herte that ye wyl doo no thyng for me. And salomon saith that he that hath ouer harde an herte he at leste shal myshappe and myf tyde. Whan Heliebe had herde dame prudence make semblaunte of wrath he he sayd in this wyse. Dame I praye you that ye be not displeid of of thynges that I saye. for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wroth and that is no wonder And they that ben wroth wote not wel what they goon ne what they sayn. wherfor the prophete saith that trobled eyen haue no clere syght. But say ye and counceyl me as you good lyketh. for I am re

dy to do right so sa ye wyl desyre And yf ye wil reprieue me of myn folie I am to more holden to loue you and to pryse you. for salamon sayth. He that reprieueth hym that doth folye he shal fynde gretter grace than he that dysseyueth hym wyth swete wordes. Than sayde dame prudence. I make no semblaunt of wrahtene of angre but for your prouffyt. for salamon sayth. he is more wrahten that reprieueth or chydeth a fool for his folye shewyng hym samblaunte of wrath than he that supporteth hym and preyseth hym in his mysdoynge and lawyeth at his folye. And this same salamon sayth afterward þe by the sorowful bysage of a man that is to saye by the sorow and they heuy cōtenaunce of a man the fool correcteth hym self and amendeth Than said mellebe I shal not conanswere you vnto so many fayr resons as ye haue put to me and shewed. Saye shortly your wyl and your counceyl and I am redy to performe and fulfill it Than dame prudence dyscoueryd al her wyl vnto hym and sayd. I counceyl you aboue alle thynges that ye make pees betwene god and you. and be ye recounceylled vnto hym and to his grace. for as I haue sayd as fore. God haue suffryd you to haue al this tribulacion and desese for youre synnes. And yf ye doo as I saye you God wyl sende your aduersaries vnto you and make hem falle at your feet. redy to do your wil and your cōmaundementes. for salamon saith

Whan the condicion of a man is ple
saunt and lykynz to god. he chaur
geth the hertes of the manys aduer
sarves & constreyneþ hem to besekke
hym of pees and of grace And I pra
ye pou lete me speke wyth your ad
uersarves pryuelly. For they shal not
knowe that it be your wyllle or your
assente. & than whan I knowe her
wyl and her entente I may counceyl
pou the more sewtly. Dame sayd
Mellebee do your wyl and your ly
kyng for I put me only in your dis
posicion and ordynauce.

¶ Whan whan dame prudence
t sawe the good wyl of her
husbond delyberyd & to ke
adyse in her self. thyn kyng how she
myght bring this nede to a good cō
clusion & to a good ende. And whan
she sawe her tyme she sent for thise
aduersarves to come to her in to a
preuy place. And shewed wysely vñ
to them the grete goodnes that come
of pees. and the grete harmes & paril
les that ben in warre & said to hem
in a goodly maner. how that they
oughten to haue grete repentaunce of
the Inurye and wronge that they
had don vnto mellebe her lord and
her daughter.

¶ And whan they herde the
a wordes of dame prudence
they were so enspyred and
rattysshed and had so grete Joye of
her þe wōder was to telle A lady said
they þe haue shewid vnto vs the blef
syng of swetnes after the sawe of da
wyd the pphete for the recoiuciling

whiche that we be not worthy to ha
ue in no manere. but we aughten to
requyre it with grete contricion and
humpylyte. that ye of your grete good
nes haue presented vnto vs. Now
see we wel that the scyence and the
connyng of Salamon is ful trewe
he sayd that swete wordes multiply
and encreesen frendes and make shre
wes to be debonayr and meke. Let
tes sayd they we put al our dede and
al our mater & cause. hooly in youre
good wyl. And be redy to obeye to
the commaundement of my lord Wel
sebe. And dere and benygne lady we
praye you and besekhe you as meke
ly as we can that it ly ke vnto your
grete goodnes to fulfyllen in dede
your wordes goodly. For we cony
deren and knowleche that we haue
offendyd and gryuyd my lord melle
be out of mesure so ferforth þe we be
not of power to make hym amēdys
And thefor we oblygen vs and byn
de vs and our frendes for to done al
his wyllle and cōmaūdentis. But
peraventure he hath suche angre &
suche wrath to vs warde by cause
of our offence. that he wol enioyne
vs suche payne that we may not be
re it ne susteyne it. And therfore no
ble lady we besekhe your noble pyte
to take suche auyfement in this nede
that we ne our frendes be not disse
rtyed & dystroyed thourgh our folye.

¶ Ertes said dame prudence
c it is a harde thing þe righ
perylous that a man put
hym self al vnterly in arbytracion

Etes sayd dame Prudence
 I graunte you wel that
 ouer moche suffraunce is
 is not good. But yet hit foloweth
 not therof þe enery persone to whom
 men doo vylonpe to take of it venge
 ance. For that apperteyneth and
 longeth al only to the Juges. For
 they shalle venge the vylonpes and
 the Injuries. & therfor the two au
 torites that ye haue sayd tofore bee
 alonely vnderstode in the Juges for
 whan ye suffre ouer many wronges
 and vylonpes to be be don wythou
 ten punysshing they semey not a mā
 to doo only newe wronges but they
 commaunden hym and bydden hym
 to do spure. And the souerayns and
 the Juges in theyr contrarpe so my
 kyng suffre of the shrewes and mysdo
 ers. that they shold by suche suffraun
 ce and by proces of tyme waxen of
 suche power & myght that they shold
 put out the Juges & the souerayns
 from thre places. And at the laste to
 make hem to lese thier lordships but
 lette be now put that. that ye haue le
 ue to venge. I say ye be not of my
 ght ne power as now to venge yow

For yf ye wyl make comparyson
 vnto the myght of your aduersarys
 ce. ye shal fynde in many thynges þ
 I haue shewed yow or this. that her
 condycion is better than yowres. &
 therfor say I that it is good as now
 that ye suffre and be pacient. Forther
 more ye knowe wel that after the co
 men sawe. it is a wodenes to a man
 to stryue wyth a more myghty man

thā he is hym self & for to striue with
 a mā of euen strethe. þ is to say with
 a man that is as strong as hym self
 Hit is grete peryl. And for to stryue
 wyth a wayker than hym it is folpe
 And therfor shold a man flee stry
 uing as mykyll as he myght. For sa
 lamon sayth hit is a grete worship
 to a man to kepe hym fro noyse &
 stryf And yf so happe that a man of
 gretter myght & strengthe than thou
 arte doo the greuaunce. stude and
 bespe the rather to stynte the greuaun
 ce. thā for to venge. For senekke saith
 That he putteth hym in grete peryll
 that stryuethe wyth a gretter man
 than he is hem self. And caton sayth
 that yf a man of hyper estate or degre
 or of more myght than thou art do
 the anoye or greuaunce suffre hym.
 For that ones hath greued the many
 another tyme releue the and help the
 yet set I caas that ye haue a licence
 for to venge yow. yet ought you to
 take hede to al thysse thynges afore
 sayd er that ye take vengeance. For
 I say that there be ful many thyng
 ges that shalle restrayne yow of ven
 geance takyng and make yow for
 to endyne to suffre and to hane paci
 ence in the wronges þ haue be doon.
 fyrst and forward and yf ye wylle
 consydere the defautes that been in
 your owen persone. for whiche de
 fautes god hath suffred yow to ha
 ue al this tribulaciō as I haue said
 before to yow. For the poete sayth.
 That we oughten paciently to take
 the tribulacions þ comen to vs whā

Mellebees frendes had herde this ne
de and taken her aduysse and deuybe
racion of the forsaide mater and had
exampned by grete besynes & grete
counceyl. thy pas ful counceyl fo: to
haue pees and reste. And that melie
bee shold receiue with good herte his
aduersaryes to foryeuenes and merc
cy. And whan dame prudence had
herd thassent of her lord mellebe and
of hys frendes. she was wonderly
glad in her herte and sayd. there is a
noble prouerbe that sayth the good
nes that thou mayst do this day do
it. and abyde not ne delaye it not tyl
to morowe And therfor. A counceyl þ
ye sende your messagers suche as be
dyscrete and wyse vnto your aduer
saryes: Tellyng hem on your behalf
that yf they wyl trete of pees and of
acorde. that they shawe hem wyth
out delay or taryng to come vnto
vs whiche thyng performed was in
dede. And whan these trespassours &
repentyng folke of her folyes that is
to saie the aduersaryes of mellebee.
had herd what thysse messagers sayd
vnto hem. they were right glad and
Joful. and answerd ful mekely and
benyngly yeldyng graces and than
kes to her lord mellebe & to al his co
panye. and shopen hem wythout de
lay to go wyth the messagers and to
obey the comauñdement of her lord
Mellebe. And right anon they toke
her waye to her lord mellebee. And
right anon the toke her waye to her
lordes courte & toke wyth hem som
me of her true frendes to make seyth

for hem & for to be her borowes.

And whan they were comen to the
presence of mellebee he sayd to hem
thysse wordes. Hit stondeth thus say
de Mellebee & soth it is that caugetes
and wythouten skyl & reson ye haue
don grete Inuertes to me to my wif
prudence and to my doughter also.
For ye haue entryd in to my hous
by dyolence & haue doon suche out
trage that al men knowe wel that ye
haue deseruyd deth. & therfor wolde
I knowe of you wheter ye wyl put
te you to punysshynge & the chastyng
& the vengeaunce of his outrage in the
wyl of me & of my wif or ellys not.

Whan the wyllest of hem thre
t answerd for hem alle and
sayde. Syr sayde he we
knowe wel that we be vnworthy to
come to the courte of so grete a lorde
and so worthy as ye be. for we haue
o grete mystaken vs and haue
offended and gylted in suche wyse a
gaynst your hie lordship that trew
ly we haue deseruyd the deth: but yet
for the grete goodnes and debonour
te that alle the worlde wytnesseth of
your persone. we submytte vs to the
excellence & benygnyte of your graci
ous lordship. and besechyng you of
your mercyable pite ye wyl cōsidere
our grete repentaunce & our lowe sub
myssyon & graunte vs foryeuenes of
our outrageous trespasses and of
fensis.

For wel we
knowen that youre lyberal grace &
mercy stretchen ferther in to goodnes
than doon our outrageous gyltes.

and trespasses in to wyckednes. Al be it that cursedly and dampnably we haue a gylted and a greuynge your lordshipp.

Then Melibee tolde hym from the grounde full benyngly and receyued her oblygacions and bondes by her othes vpon her pledges and borowes. and assygned hem a certayn daye to retorne vnto her courte for to receyue and accepte the Iugement that melibee wold comaunde to be doon on hem by the causes aforesayd. whiche thinges ordeyned euery man retorned to his owen hous. And whan dame prudence sawe her tyme she scyded and aped her lord melibee. what vengeance he thought to take vpon his aduersaries. to which melibee answered and sayd certes I thynke a purpose me fully to dysheryte hem of alle þe cuer they haue and put hem in exyle for euermore. Certes sayd dame prudence. This were a cruel sentence and moche agaynst reson for ye be riche ynough and haue non nede of other mennes goodes. And ye myght ful lyghtly in this wyse gete yow a full couetous name. whiche is a vycious lyuynge and ought to be eschewed of euery good man. for after the worde of thapostle. Couetyse is the rote of al haumes. And therfor it were better to yow to lese so moche good of your owen than for to take of her good in this manere. for better it is to lese good wyth worship. than it is to wyne good wyth vylonye and

shame. And euery man ought to do his diligence and besynes to gete hym a good name. and yet shal he not hooly besye hym in luyng of his good name. But he shal alle way enforen to do somme thyng by wyche he may renouele or renowe his good name. for it is wyrtow that the olde goode loos of a man or good name is sone goon and passid whan it is not newed ne renouelyd. and as touchinge that ye sayn. ye wol exyle your aduersaries. that thynketh me moche agayn reson and out of mesure. consyderynge the power that they haue yow vpon hem self. And yet it is wyrtow that he is worthy to lese his pryuylege þe mysuseth the myght and the power that is yow hym. And I set caas þe ye myght enioye hem þe payne by right and by lawe. whiche þe I trowe ye may not do. I say ye myght not put it to execution for parauenture than were it lyke to retorne to the warre as it was before. And therfore ys ye wyl that men doo yow obysaunce ye must demene you more curtosly. This is to say ye must yeue more espy penaunce and Iugement. for it is wyrtow that he þe most curtosly comaundeth to hym men moste obye. and therfor I praye yow þe in this necessyte and in this nede ye cast yow for to ouercome your herte for senek saith. He that ouercometh his herte. ouercometh twyes. And tulyus sayth. There is nothyng so comendable in a grete lord as whan he is debonayre

and meke. And appeesyth hym light
ly. And I praye you that ye wyl
now forbide to do vengeance in su-
che a maner that youre good name
may be lepte and conseruyd. And þ
men may haue cause and mater to
praysye you of pyte and of mercy.
And that ye haue no cause to repete
you of thyng that is doon. For
Senekre sayth: He ouercometh an e-
uyl maner that repēteth hym of his
byctorye. wherfore I praye you lete
mercy be in your herte. To the effect
to the entente that god almyghty ha-
ue mercy on you in his laste Juge-
ment. For saynt James sayth in
his epistyls Jugement wpythout mer-
cy shalbe doo to hym that hath noo
mercy on an other wyght.

Jan mellebee had herd the
w grete skylles and resons of
danie prudence a her wy-
se Informacions and technynges his
herte began tenclyne to the wyll of
his wyf consydyryn her grete en-
tente confermed hym anon and as-
sented to werke after her counceylle.

And thanked god of whom pre-
cedeth alle goodnes and vertue that
hym had sente a wyf of grete dyscre-
cyon. And whan the day cam that
his aduersaryes shold appere in his
presence. He spak to hem ful
goodly and sayd in this wyse. Al-
be it so that of youre pryde and pre-
sumpcion and hys folye of your ne-
gylgence and Uncomynge ye haue

mysborne you and tresspacyd vnto
me. yet for as mykyl as I see youre
grete humylyte and that ye be sorry
and repentaunte of youre gyltyes it
constrayneth me to doo you grace
and mercy.

Wherfor I re-
ceyue you to my grace and foryeue
you vtterly alle the offences Inuiri-
es and wronges that ye haue doon
ayenst me to this effecte and to this
ende. that god of his endeles mercy
wyl at the day of my deying forye-
ue me my gyltes. that I haue trespac-
ed to hym in this worlde. For
doubteles yf we be sorry and repen-
taunte for our synnes and gyltes.

The syght of our lord god is soo fre
and soo mercyable that he wyl for-
gyue vs our gyltes and bynge vs
to the blysse that neuer shalle haue
ende Amen.

Here endeth Chaucers Tale of
Mellebee and Prudence his wyf a
Sophye his doughter of moralte.

Here begynneth the monkes prologue

W Han endyd was the tale of Mellebe
 And of prudence and her benignyte
 Dure hoost sayd as I am feythfulle man
 And by that precious corpus Madrian
 I hadde lyuer than a barelle of ale
 That good leef my wyf hade herde this tale
 For she is nothyng of suche pacience
 As was this Mellebens wyf prudence
 By goddes bones whan I bete my knaves
 She bryngeth me the grete clobbered staves
 And cryeth sle the dogges euerichone
 And breke bothe bake and euery bone
 And if that any nyghboure of myn
 Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne
 Or be so hardy to her to trespace
 Whan she comyth home she rampeth in my face
 And cryeth fals colwarde wreke thy wyf
 By corpus dominus I wol haue thy knyf
 And thou shalt haue my distaue and go spyne
 Fro day to nyght she wol thus begynne
 Allas she sayeth that euir I was shape
 To wedde a mylkesoppe a colwarde ape
 That wol be ouir ledde with euery wighe
 Thou darst nat stonde by thy wyues right
 This is my lyf. but if that I wolde fight
 And oute at the doze anon I must me dighe
 And elles I am lost but if that I
 Be lyke a wylde lyoun fool hardy
 I wote wele she wol do me sle som day
 Som nyghboure and than go my way
 For I am varlous with knyf in honde

The monkes' prologue

Al be it that I dar nat her withstonde
For she was byg in armes by my feith
That shal he fynde that her mysdoth or sayeth
But let vs passe a way from this matere
My lord sir monke he sayd be mery of chere
For ye shalle telle a tale truly
Lo Kouchestre stondest here fast by
Ryde forth myn owne lorde breke nat our game
But by my trouthe I knowe nat your name
Whether shalle I calle you my lorde dan John
Or dan Thomas dan robert or dan Albon
Or of what house be ye by youre fader kyn
I bowe to god thou hast a fulle fayre chyn
It is a gentyl pasture there thou goost
Thou art nat lyke a penaunt or a goost
Upon my feyth thou art som officere
Som worthy Sexten or som celerere
For by my fadre soule as to my dome
Thou art a mayster whan thou art at home
No poure cloysterez ne no poure nouyce
But a gouernoure wyly and wyse
And therewith of brawne and of bones
A wele faryng persone for the nones
I pray to god yeue him confusioun
That first he brought into religion
Thou woldest haue be a tred soule a right
Haddyt thou as grette leue as thou hast myght
To parfouze me alle thy lust in engendrere
Thou haddest begoten many a creature
Allas why werist thou so wyde a cope
God gyue me sorowe and I were pope
Nat only thou but euery myghty man
Though he were shore high vpon his pay

The monkes prologue

Sholde haue a wyf, for alle this worlde is loyn
Religion hath take by alle the corn
Of tredpyng and bozel men be shrympes
Of feble trees there comyth wrechyd ympes
This makith that oure heyres be so slender
And feble that they may nat wele engendre
This makith that oure wyues wol assay
Religpous folke for they may better pay
Of venus paymentes than may we
God wote no bussheburghes pay ye
But be nat wrothe my lord though I pley
ful ofte in game a soth haue I herde say
This worthy monke toke alle in pacience
And sayd I wol do my diligence
As fer as sowneth into honeste
To tel you a tale or two or thre
And if you lyst to herkyn hedprwarde
I wol you sayn of the lpf of seint Edward
Or elles tragedys first I wol telle
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my celle
Tragedy is for to telle a certayn story
As olde bokes maken memozy
Of them that stonden in grete prosperite
And is falle oute of high degre
In to mysery and endith wrechydly
And they been bercifyed comonly
Of sey feet whiche men clepen exameron
In prose eke been endyted many one
And in metre many a sondry wyse
So this ough t ynough to suffise
Now herkne th if you lyst for to here
But first I besече you in this matere
Though I by ordre tel nat these thynges

The monkes Tale

Be it of popes Emperouzes or kynnges
And after theiꝝ ages as men Writen fynde
But telle them som biſoze and ſom behynde
As it comyth to my remembraunce
Haue me excuſed of myn ignoraunce

Here endith the monkes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



i Wol beWayle in maner of tragedy
The harme of them that stonde in high degre
And fylle so that there nas no remedy
To bryng them oute of theire aduersite
For certayn whan that fortune lyst to fle
Ther may no man of her the cours witholde
Late noman truste on blynde prosperite
Be ware by this ensample yong and olde
At Lucifer though he an aungel were

And nat a man at him I wol betynne
 For though fortune may nat aungel dere;
 From high degre yet fyl he for his synne
 Down into helle where he is yet in
 Lucifer brightest of aungelles alle
 Now art thou sathanas thou mayst nat twyn
 Dute of mysery whiche thou arte falle

So Adam in the felde of damascene
 With goddes owne synnger wrought was
 And nat begoten of mannes sperme vnclene
 And welte alle paradise sauynge one tre
 Hadde neuir worldly man so high degre
 As Adam. tyl he for mys gouernaunce
 Was dryuen oute of his high prosperite
 To laboure and to helle and to myschaunce

So Sampson whiche that was annunciat
 By the aungel long or his natiuyte
 And was to god almyghty consecrate
 And stode in nobles while he myght se
 Was neuir suche a nother as was he
 To speke of strengith and therto hardynes
 But to his wyues told he his secre
 Through whiche he slough him for wrechydnesse

Sampson this noble and myghty champion
 Withoute wepyn saue his handes tvey
 He slough and alle to rent the tyoun
 Toward his weddyng walkyng by the wey
 His fals wyf coude him so please and pray
 Tyl she his counseyl knewe and she vntrue
 Vnto his foos his counseyl gan he wray
 And him for soke and toke an other newe

An hundred foyes toke Sampson for ire
 And alle theire tayles he to tyddez bonde

The monkes Tale

And set the foyes tayles alle on fyre
Ffor he in euery tayle put a bronde
And they Brent alle the cornes of that londe
And theire olyues and theire Wynes eke
A thousand men eke he slough With his honde
And hadde no weppyn but an asses cheke

Whan they were slayn so thristed him that he
Was wele nygh loyn for whiche he gan to prey
That god worde of his peyne haue som pyte
And sende him drynke or elles must he dye
And of this asses cheke that was so drye
Dute of a Wang tothe sprang anon a Welle
Of whiche he dranke ynough shortly to say
Thus halpe him god as Judicum can tel

By berry force at gasa on a nyght
Maugre the philystiens of that cyte
The gates of the toun he hath by plight
And on his backe y carried them hath he
Rygh on an hylle where as men myght them se
D noble and myghty sampson leef and dere
Hadde thou nat tolde to women thy secre
In alle this worlde ne hadde he thy pere

This Sampson neyther sydre dranke ne wyne
Ne on his hede cam rasoure none ne shere
By precept of the messangere deuyne
Ffor al his strengthes in his heris were
And fully tWenty pere by pere
Of israel he hadde the gouernance
But after sone wept he many a tere
Ffor Wymen brought him to myschaunce

Vnto his lemman dalida he tolde
That in his heris alle his strenght lay
And falsely to his foos him she solde

The monkes Tale

And sleppng in her barme vpon a day
They made to clyppe oz shere his here a wey
And made his fomen alle his craft aspyen
And whan that they him fonde in suche aray
They bonde him faste and put oute his eyen
But oz his heres were clypped oz shaue
There nas no bonde that myght him bynde
But now is he put in pryson in a caue
Whete as they made him at the querne grynde
O noble Sampson strongest of mankynde
O whilom iuge in glozy and in riches
Now mayst thou wepe with thy eyn blynde
Sithen thou art from wele fallen into wrecchyndes

The ende of this captyf was as I shalle say
His fomen made a feest vpon a day
And made them as their fool bifoze them pley
And this was in a temple of grette aray
But at the last he made a soule fray
Foz he two postes shoke and made them falle
And down fylle the temple and there it lay
And slew him selue and eke his fomen alle

This is to say the prynces euerichone
And eke thre thousand bodies were there slayn
With fallng of the grette temple of stone
Of Sampson wol I nomore sayn
Be ware of this ensample olde and playn
That no man telle their counseyl to their wyues
Of suche thyng as they wolde haue secre fayn
If that it touche their lymmes oz their lyues
O Hercules the sonerayne conquerouze
Synngn his werkes laude and his renoun
Foz in his tyme of strenght he bare the flour
He slough and reft the shynne of the loun

The monkes Tale

And of Centaurus leyd the boſt a doun
He arpies ſlowe the cruelle birdes felle
He the goloen apelles raft fro the dragon
He droue oute cerberus the hounde of hel

He ſlough the cruel tyraunt buſurus
And made his horſe to frete him fleſſhe and boon

He ſlough the verzy ſerpent venemous
Of achilles two hornes brake he that one
And he ſlew cacus in a caue of ſtone

He ſlew the tyraunt Antheus the ſtrong
He ſlough the gryſely bore and that a noon
And bare his hede vpon his necke long

Was neuer wight ſithen the worlde began
That ſlough ſo many monſtres as dyd he
Through the wyde world his name ran
What for his ſtrenght and his bounte
And euery realme went he for to ſee
He was ſo ſtrong that no man myght him lette
And bothe worldes endys ſayth Trophe
In ſtede of boundes he of bras a pyler ſet

Alemman hadde this noble champron
That hight dyanpra as freſſhe as may
And as clerkes make mencion

She hath him ſent a ſhert freſſhe and gay
Allas that ſhert allas and Wela way
Enuenned was ſubtelly with alle
That oz he hadde werpd it half a day
It made his fleſſhe al fro the bones falle

But neuer theleſſe clerkes her excuſen
By one that hight neſſus that it maketh
Be as he may I wol nat her accuſen

But on his body the ſhert he werpd alle naked
Tyl the fleſſhe was with the benym ſlaked

The monkes Tale

And whan he sa we none othez remedy
In hoot coles he hath him self raked
For with no benym depned he to dye

Thus starf this worthy myghty hercules
Fo who may truste in fortune any throuwe
For him that folothth al this worlde of prees
Or he be ware is oft leyde fulle lowe
Ful wyse is he that him self can knowe
Be ware for whan that fortune lyst to glose
Than wayteth she her man down to throuwe
By suche a way as he wolde lest suppose
t he myghty trone the precious tresoure

The glorious septre and the ryal maggesty
That hadde the kyng Nabugodonosor
With tongue bnneth may discribed be
He t wyes wan ierusalem that cyte
The vessel of the temple hej with him ladde
At Sabilon was his souerayn see
In whiche his glozy and his delyte he had

The fayrest children of the blode ryal
Of ierusalem he dyd do gælde anoon
And made eche of them to be his thralle
Among alle othez danyel was one
That was the wysest childe of euerichone
For he the dremys of the kyng expounded
Ther as in caldey clerkes were ther none
That wyst to what fyne his dreame fownded

This proude kyng leet make a statuf of gold
Sixty cubites long and seuyh in brede
To whiche ymatte bothe yong and olde
Comaunded he to loute and haue in drede
Or in a furneyz fulle of flames rede
He sholde be dede that wolde nat obey

The monkes Tale

But neuiz wolde accorde to that dede
Danyel ne his yong felowes twey
This kyng of kynges proude and elate
He wende god that sytteth in magestye
He myght nat bereue of his estate
But sodenly he lost his dignyte
And lyke a best him semyd for to be
And ete hay as an ox and lay theroute
In rayn With Wylde bestes Walked he
Tyl a certayn tyme Was come aboute
And lyke an eglys fethers Were his heris
And napples lyke byrdes clawes Wer
God releuyd him at certayn yeres
And gaue him wytte and than With many a tere
He thanked god and euiz his lyf in fere
Was he to do amys or more trespass
And or that he layd Was on his bere
He knewe that god Was fulle of myght and grace
h Is sone whiche that hight balthasar
That held the regne after his faders day
He by his fader coude nat be ware
For proude he was of hert and of aray
And eke an ydolaster Was he ay
His high estate assured him in pryde
But fortune cast him down and there he lay
And sodenly his regne can deuyde
A feste he made vnto his lordes alle
Upon a tyme he made them blythe be
And than his officers gan he calle
Both bryng forth the bestelles quod he
Whiche that my fader in his prosperite
Dute of the temple of ierusalem beraft
And to oure goddes thanke we

The monkes Tale

Of honoure that our elders With vs last
His wyf his lordes and his concubynes
Ay dronken While theire appetytes last
Dute of these noble vesselles sondry Wynes
And on a walle this kyng his eyen cast
And sa we an hounde armeles that wrote fast
For fere of whiche he quoke and sigged sore
This hound that balthasar made so soze agast
Wrote mane. techel. phares. and no more

In al that londe magicien Was there none
This coude expowne what this lettre ment
But danyel expounded it anoon
And sayd kyng. god to thy fadre sent
Glorie and honoure regne tresour and rent
And he was proude and nothyng god he drad
And therfore grete wrathe god byon him sent
And him berast the reigne that he hadde

He was oute cast of mannes company
With asses was his habitacioun
And ete hey as a best in weet and dry
Tyl that he knewe by grace and by reason
That god of heuyn hath domynacion
Quir euery reigne and euery crature
And than hadde god of him compassion
And him restored his reigne and his figure

Eke thou that art his sone art proude also
And knowest alle these thynges pryuely
And art rebel to god and his foo
Thou dranke eke of his vesselles boldely
Thy wyf eke and thy wenches synfully
Dranke of the same vesselles sondry Wynes
And heried false goddes cursydly
Therfore to the shapen grete pyne is

The monkes Tale

This honde was sent fro god that on the walle
Wrote mane techel phares trust me
Thy reigne is done thou weyest nat alle
Deuyded is thy regne and it shalbe
To medes and to percypens quod he
And that same nyght the kyng was slaw
And daryus occupied his degree

Though he therto hadde nother right ne la we
Lorดยnges here by en samples may ye take

How that in lordshyp is no sikyrnes
For whan that fortune wol aman forsake
He berith a wey his regne and his richesse
And eke his frendes bothe more and les
And what man hath frendes through fortune
Myshappe wol make him enemyes I gesse
This prouerbe is fulle soth and ful comune

c Enobia of Palymerie quene

As writeth percypens of her noblenes

So worthy was in armes and so hene
That no wight past her in hardynesse
Ne in lynage ne in none othez gentylnes
Of kynges blode of Perce is she discended
I say that she hadde nat moste fayrnesse
But of her shappe she myght nat be amended

From her childehode I fynde that she fled
Office of woman and to wode she went
And many a wylde hertes blode she shedde
With arowes brode that she to them sent
She was so swyft that she anoon them hent
And whan that she was elder she wolde kylle
Eyounes lybertes and berys alle to rent
And in her armes welde them at her wylle
She durst wylde bestes dennys seke

The monkes Tale

And renne in the mounten alle the nyght
And slepe vndre a busshe and she coude eke
Wrastyl by very force and very myght
With any yong man were her neuiz so wight
There myght nothyng in her armes stonde
She kept her maydenhede from euery wight
To no man deyned she to be bonde

But at the last her frendes hath her married
To Onedache a prynce of that countre
Al were it so that she them long tarped
And ye shall vnderstonde how that he
Hadde suche fantasies as hadde she
But neuir thelesse whan they were knytte in fere
They lyued in ioye and in felicitye
For eche of them had othez leef and dere

Saue one thyng that she wolde neuir assent
By no wey that he sholde by her eye
But onys for it was pleyn her entent
To haue a chyldre the world to multiplie
And also sone as she myght aspye
That she was nat with childe with that dede
Than wolde she suffre him to do his fanteisy
Eft sones and nat but onys oute of drede

And if she were with chylde at that cast
Nomore sholde he play that game
Tyl fully forty daies were y past
Thenne wolde she onys suffre him the same
Alle were this onedache wyldre or tame
He gat no more of her for thus she sayde
It was to wyues lychery and shame
In othez caas if men with them played

Two sones by this Onedache had she
The whiche she kept in vertue and lettrure

The monkes Tale

But now vnto oure tale turne We
I say that so worshopfulle a creature
And wyse therewith and lartge with mesure
So penyble in warre and curteyse eke
Ne more labour myght in warre endure
Was noon though alle this worlde men wold seke
Her riche aray ne myght nat be told
As wele in vessel as in her clothyng
She was alle cladde in perry and in golde
And eke left nat for none huntynge
To haue of sondry tonges folke knowynge
Whan that she leysur hadde and for to entende
Tolerne bokes was alle her lyhyng
How she in vertue her lyf myght dispende
And shortly of this story for to trete
So doughty was her husbonde as she
That they conquered many realmes grette
In the orient with many a fayre cyte
Appertenaunt vnto the maieste
Of Rome. and with strengith helde them faste
Ne neuiz myght her fomen do her sle
Al the while that Dnedakys daies last
Her batayles who solyst them for to rede
Agayn Sapor the kynge and othez mo
And how alle this processe fyl in dede
Why she conqueryd and what tytle she had therto
And after of her myscheif and of her wo
How that she was beseggyd and y take
Let him to my mayster petrarke goo
That writeth ynough of this I vndertake
Whan Dnedache was dede she myghtely
The realmes helde and with her owne honde
Apenst her foos she fought truly

That ther nas prynce ne kyng in alle that sonde
 But were glade if they that grace fonde
 That she ne sholde byon his sonde warrey
 With her they made allyaunce by bonde
 To be in peas and let them ryde and pley

The emperoure of Rome Claudius
 Ne him bifore the Romayn Galtene
 Ne durst neur be so corageous
 Ne noon ermyne ne none egipcyen
 Ne surzpen ne none arzabien
 Within the felde that durst with her fight
 Lest that she wolde them with her handes slayn
 Or with her meney put them to flight

In kynges habite went her sones two
 As heires of her realmes alle
 And hermanno and titamallo
 Theire names were as perciens them calle
 But ay fortune hath in her hony galle
 This myghty quene may no while endure
 Fortune oute of reigne made her to falle
 To wrechydnesse and to mysauenture

Aurilian whan that the gouernaunce
 Of Rome cam in his hondes twey
 He shope byon this quene to do vengeance
 And with his leggyons he toke his wey
 Toward Tenobie and shortly for to say
 He made her fle and at the last her hent
 And setryd her and eke her children twey
 And wan the sonde and home to Rome he went

Among othez thynges that he wan
 Her chare that of golde was wrought and perze
 This grete Romayn this Aurilian
 Hath with him lad that for men sholde se

The monkes Tale

Bifore his'trumphe walkyd she
With golden cheynes on her hangyng
Crowned she was as after her degre
And ful of perz charged her clothyng
 Allas fortune she that whilom was
Dredefulle to kyniges and to Emperoures
Now gaureth alle the people on her alas
And she that helmyd was in starke stoures
And wan by force townes strong and toures
Shal on her hede now were autrempte
And she that bare the septre fulle of floures
Shal bere a dystaf her cost for to quyte
o If Mylane grete barnabo biscount
 God of delyte and scorge of Lumbardy
Why sholde nat I thy fortune acounte
Sithen in estate thou clomben were so hye
Thy brother sone that was thy double alye
For he thy nebeve was and sonne in la we
Within his pryson made the to dye
But why ne how not I that thou were sla we
o If the erle huglyn of pyse the langoure
 There may no tongue telle for pyte
But lyteloute of pyse stondesth a toure
In whiche toure in pryson put was he
And with him his lytel chyl dren thre
The eldest scarfly fyue yere was of age
Allas fortune it was grete cruelte
Suche byrdes to put in suche a cage
Dampned he was to dye in that pryson
For Rogez whiche bissshop was of pyse
Hadde on him made a false subggestion
Througth whiche the people gan on him aryse
And put him in pryson in suche wyse

The monkes Tale

As ye haue herd and mete and drynke he hadde
So smal that wele bnneth it may suffise
And therwith al it was fulle poure and hadde

And on a day it besylle that in that oure
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought
The gayler shytte the dozes of the toure
He herd it wele but he spake right nought
And in his hert anoon ther fylle a thought
That they for hungre wolde do him to dyen
Allas quod he allas that I was brought
Therwith the teris fyl from his eyen

His yong sone that thre yere was of age
Vnto his fadre he sayd why do ye wepe
Whan wol oure gayler bryng oure potage
Is ther no morsel brede that ye do kepe
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe
Now wolde to god that I myght slepe euiz
Than sholde no hungtre in my soule crepe
Ther is no thyng than brede that me were lyuez

Thus day by day this childe gan to crye
Tyl in his faders barme a down it lay
And sayd fare wele fader I must dye
And kyssed his fader and dyed the same day
And whan the woful fader dede him say
For wo his armes he gan to byte
And sayd allas fortune and wela wey
Thy fals whele my woo alle may wyte

This othez childe wende that for hungtre it was
That he his armes kne we and nat for wo
And sayd fader do nat so allas
Bnt rather ete the flesshe vpon vs t wo
Dure flesshe thou yauue vs take oure flesshe vs fro
And ete ynough right thus the childe sayde

The monkes Tale

And after that within a day or two
They leyde them down in his lappe and deyde
Him self despeyred eke for hunger starf
Thus endyd the myghty erle of ppyse
From high estate fortune away him carf
Of this tragedie it ought ynough suffice
Who so wol here it in a lenger wyse
Redith the grete poete of pytaye
That hight daunte for he can it deuyse
From poynte to poynte nat one worde wol he saye
a I thought that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lyeth ful low adoun
yet he as telith vs swetonyus
At this worlde hadde in subiection
Bothe est and west and septentrion
Of rubies saphires and of perles white
were alle his clothes browded by and down
for he in gemmys gretly gan delyte
More delicate more pompeous of aray
More proude was neuiz emperour than he
That ilke cloth that he hadde weyde one day
After that tyme he nolde it neuiz se
Nettes of golde threde hadde he grete plente
To fyssh in tyber whan him lyst to pley
His lustes were as laue in his degre
for fortune as his frende wolde him obey
He Rome Brent for his delycacy
The senatoures he slough upon a day
To here how that tho men wolde wepe and crye
And slough his brother and by his sustre lay
His modre made he in a pytous aray
for he her wombe leet slytte to beholde
where he conceived was so welauey

The monkes Tale

That he so lytel of his modre tolde
No teris oute of his eyen for that sight
Ne cam, but sayd a fayre woman was she
Grete wondre is that he coude or myght
Be domesman of her dede beaute
The wyne to bryng him comaunded he
And dranke anoon none othez wo he made
Whan myght is ioyned vnto cruelte
Allas to depe wol the benym Wade

In youthe a mayster had this emperoure
To teche him lettrure and curtesy
Froz of moralite he was the floure
As in his tyme but if his bokes lye
And whyles his mayster hadde of him maystre
He made him so connyng and so souple
That long tyme it was or tyrannye
Or any byce durst in him vncouple

Seneca his mayster was of whiche I deuyse
Bicause Nero hadde of him suche drede
Froz he for his byces wolde him chastice
Discretly as by worde and nat by dede
Sir he wolde say an emperonz moot nede
Be vertuous and hate tyranny
Froz whiche he made him a bathe to blede
On bothes his armes tyl he must dye

This nero hadde eke of accustumaunce
In youthe ayenst his mayster to ryse
Whiche a fter ward him thoughte a grete greuaunce
Bicause he oft wolde him chastice
Therfore he made him dye in this wyse
To these in a bathe to dye in this manere
Rather than to haue a nothez turmentyse
And thus hath Nero slayn his mayster dere

The monkes Tale

Now fyl it so that fortune lyst no lenger
The high pryde of nero to cheryshe
For though he ware strong yet was she strenger
She thought thus by god I am to nyce
To sette a man that is fulfylled of vyce
In high degre and an emperoure him calle
By god oute of his sete I wol him tryce
When he lest wenyth sonest shal he falle

The people roos vpon him on a nyght
For his defeute and whan he it aspyed
Dute of his doores anon he hath him dight
Alone and there he wende to be allyed
He knocked faste and ay the more he cryde
The fastyr shytt they the doores alle
Tho wylt he wele he hadde him self betyled
And went his wey no lenger durst he calle

The people cryde and rombled vp and down
That with his eris he herd how that they sayd
Where is this false tyraunt this neron
For fere ful nere oute of his wytte he Brayde
And to his goddes pytously he prayde
For socoure but it myght nat betyde
For drede of this him thought that he deyde
And ran into a gardeyn him to hyde

And in this gardeyn sonde he chorles tway
And sytting by a fyre grete and rede
And to the chorles tway he gan to pray
To sle him and to tpyrde of his hede
That to his body whan he were dede
Were no despyte doon for his defame
Him self he sloth he coude no better rede
Of whiche fortune lough and hadde game

The monkes Tale

Was neuir capdeyn vndre a kynng
That regnes mo put in subiectioun
Ne strengtez was in feld of al thyng
As in his tyme ne greter of renoun
Ne more pompeous in high presumcioun
Than olopherne whiche fortune ay lyst
Solicorouse ladde him vp and down
Tyl that he dede was or that he wylt
Nat only that this worlde hadde of him a we
Foz lesyng of richesse and lyberty
But he made euery man renye his la we
Nabugodonosoz was lord sayd he
None othez lord shal honoured be
Apenst his heste ther dar no wight trespas
Saue in bethulia a strong cyte
Where Eliachim was preest of that place
But take hepe of the deth of olopherne
Amyd his hoost he dronke lay al nyght
Within his tente large as is a berne
And yet for alle his pompe and alle his myght
Judith a woman as he lay vp right
Slepyng his hede of smote and fro his tent
Ful pryuelly she stole from euery wight
And with his hede vnto her toung she went
W hat nedith it of kynng Antiochus
To telle his high and ryalle maggesty
His high pryde his werke benemous
Foz suche a nothez man nas neuir as he
Redith what that he was in machabe
And redith the proude werkes that he sayd
And why he fyl from his prosperite
And in an hylle how wrecidly he deyde
Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde

The monkes Tale

That verily he wende he myght attayne
Vnto the sterzys bpon every syde
And in a balauce to wey eche mounteyn
And alle the flodes of the see restreyne
And goddes people hadde he moost in hate
Them wolde he sle in turment and in peyne
Wenyng that god ne myght his pryde abate

And for that Nichamor and Tymothe
Whiche iewes were benquysshed myghtely
Vnto the iewes suche an hate had he
That he had grathed his chare fulle hastely
And swore and sayde ful despytously
Vnto ierusalem he wolde eft sone
To wreke his pre on it ful cruelly
But of his purpos was he let fulle sone

God for his manace him soze smote
With inuysible wounde ay incurable
That in his guttes carf so and bote
That his peynes were importable
And certaynly the wreche was resonable
For many a manns guttes dyd he peyne
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable
For alle his smert he nolde him restreyne

But hadde anoon pareylen his hoost
And sodenly or he than was ware
God daunted alle his pryde and alle his boost
For he so soze fyl oute of his chare
That alle his lymmes and his fleshe to tare
So that he ne myght go ne ryde
But in a chare men aboute him bare
Al for brosed bothe bake and syde

The wreche of god him smote so cruelly
That in his body wyched wormes crept

The monkes Tale

And therewithal he stanke so horribly
That none of alle his meny that him kept
Whether that he woke oz elles slept
Ne myght nat of him the stynke endure
And in this myschief he wayled and he wept
And knewe god lord of euery creature

To al his hoost and to him self also
Ful waltson was the stynke of his careyn
No man myght him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke and in his horrible peyn
He starf ful wrechydly on a mountayn
Thus hath this robber and this homycide
That many a man made to wepe and playn
Suche guerdon as belongith vnto pryde
t he stoyr of Alisaundre is so comune

That euery wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somwhat oz alle of his fortune
This wyde worlde as in conclusioun
He wan by strenght and by his renoun
They were glade for peas vnto him sende
The pryde of man and host he leyd adoun
Where so he cam vnto the worldes ende

Comparioun myght yet neuiz be made
Bitwyte him and an othez conquerour
For alle this worlde for drede of him quaked
He was of knyghthode and of freedom floure
Fortune him made the heire of high honoure
Sawe wyne and wemen nothyng myght as wage
His high entent in armes and laboure
So was he ful of lounyng corage

What pryde were it to him thought I you tolde
Of darius and of an hundred thousand mo
Of prynces erles and kynnges bolde

The monkes Tale

Whiche he conquered and brought to wo
I say as fez as a man may ryde or go
The worlde was his what shuld y more deuyse
For though I wrote and tolde you euir mo
Of his knyghthode, it myght nat suffise
 vii yere he reigned as y rede in Machabe
Philippes sone of macedone he was
That first was kynng of grece that countre
O worthy gentyl Arisaundes allas
That euir shuld the falle suche a caas
Enpoysoned of thy folke thou were
Thy syce fortune hath turned into an aas
And yet for the ne wept she neuir a tere
 Who shal yeue men teris to compleyne
The deth of gentylles and of fraunchise
That alle the worlde welded in his demeyne
And yet him thought it myght nat suffise
So ful was his corage of nigh empyse
Alas who shal me helpe to endite
Fals fortune and poyson to dyspyse
The whiche of alle this wo I wyte
 By wysdome manhode and grete laboure
 From humble bedde to ryalle magesty
Up roos he Julius the conqueroure
That alle the occident bylonde and see
By strenght of hond or elles by tetrye
And vnto Rome made them tributary
And sithen of Rome emperour was he
Tyl that fortune weyt his aduersary
 O myghty cesar that in Thessaly
Aynst pompeyus fader thyn in lawe
That of the orient hadde the cheualry
As fez as that the day begynneth to dawne

The Monkes tale

Them through knyghthode hast take and slaue
Saue fewe folke that with pompeius fledde
Through whiche thou puttest al the orient in a we
Thanke fortune that so wele the spedde

But now a lytel while I wol be wayle
This pompeius this noble gouernoure
Of Rome whiche that fledde at this batayle
I say one of his men a false traytoure
His hede of smote to wynne him fauoure
Of Iulius. and to him thedez brought
Allas pompey of the orient conquerour
That fortune vnto suche a spne the brought

To Rome agayn repayrith Iulius
With his tryumphe laureat ful hys
But on a tyme brutus cassius
That euiz hadde of his high estate enuye
fulle pryuelly had made conspiracy
ayenst this Iulius in subtel wyse
And cast the place in whiche he shuld dy
with boydehyns as I shal you deuyse

This Iulius vnto the capitol y went
Upon a day as he was wont to goon
And in the capitol y noon him hent
This false brutus and his othez foon
And styched him with boydehynnes noon
With many a wound and thus they leet him lye
But neuiz gruntyd he at no stroke but one
Or elles at two but if his stoz y lye

So manly was this Iulius of herte
And so wele louyd estatly honesty
That though his dedly woundes so soze smert
His mantel ouiz his hippes cast he
For no man sholde se his preynte

As he lay in dyng on a traunce
 And wylt verily that dye sholde he
 Of honesty yet hadde he remembraunce
 Lucan to the this story I recomende
 And to sweton and to balery also
 That of this story Writen worde and ende
 How that these conquerouzes two
 Fortune was first a frende and sithen a fo
 Roman truste vpon her fauoure longe
 But haue her in a wayte for euirmoo
 Wytnes on al the conquerouzes stronge
 O Noble o worthy petro glory of spayne
 Whom fortune helde so high in magesty
 Wele ought men thy pytous de th compleyne
 Dute of thy sonde thy Brothet made the fle
 And after at a sicge by subtelty
 Thou were betrayed and ladde vp to his tent
 Where as he with his owne honde slough the
 Succeedyng in thy regne and in thy rent

The felde of snowe with the eggle of blache therein
 Caught with the lym rode coloured as a gleden
 He brewe this cursydnes and al this synne
 The wyched nest was werkez of this nede
 Nat charles olyuere that toke ay hede
 Of trouthe and honouze. but of armozpke
 Genelon oly nere corrupt for mede
 Brought this worthy kyng in suche a bryke
 O worthy petro kyng of cypre also
 That Ali saundie wan by hitth maystrye
 Ful many an hethen wroughest thou ful wo
 Of whiche thyn owne lietges hadde enuye
 And for no thyng but for thy cheualry
 They in thy bedde haue slayn the by the morowe

The Monkes tale

Thus can fortune wele gouerne and tye
And oute of ioye bryng men to sorowe

t He riche cresus whilom kynng of lyde

Of whiche cresus cyrus sore him dradde
yet was he caught amyd alle his pryde

And to brenne men to the fyre him ladde

But suche a rayn down fro the firmament shadde

That queynte the fyre and made him to scape

But to be waze yet no grace he hadde

Thyl fortune on the galowes made him tye

Whan he escaped was he coude nat stynt

for to begynne a newe arsay agayn

He wende wele for that fortune him sent

Suche happe that he escaped through the rayne

That of his foos he myght nat be stayn

And eke a sweuyh vpon a nyght he mette

Of whiche he was so proude and so sayn

That in vengeance he alle his herte set

Vpon a tre he was as him thoughte

There iupiter him wesshe bothe backe and syde

And phebus eke a fayre towel him brought

To dry him with and therwith weyt his pryde

And to his doughter that stode him besyde

Whiche that he knewe in hight sentence habounded

He hadde her telle what it signyfied

And she his dremps right thus expownded

The tre quod she the galowes is to mene

And iupiter betokeneth snowe and rayne

And phebus with his towel so clene

Betokeneth the sonne bemys soth to sayn

Thou shalt an hanged be fader certayn

Rayn shal the wasshe and sonne shal the drye

Thus she warnyd him ful plat and ful playn

His doughter that called was phanye

The Monkes tale

An hantyd was crefus the proude knyng
His ryalle trone myght him nat auayle
Tragedy is noon othez maner thyng
Ne can in synng cryng ne be wayle
But for that fortune alday wyl assayle
With vnware stroke the regnes that be proude
For whan men trust in her than wol she fayle
And couir her bright face vndre a cloude

Here endith the tale of the monke
And begynneth the prologue
Of the Monnes preest

¶ Quod the knyght gode sir no more of this
That ye haue sayd is right ynough y wys
And mekyl more for lytel heynes
Is right ynough to mekyl folke I gesse
I say for me it is a grete disease
Where as men haue be in welthe and case
To here of thei2 soden falle alas
And the contrarpe is ioye and solas
As whan a man hath be in poure estate
And clymbeth vp and weyeth fortunate
And there abideth in prosperite
Suche thyng is gladson as thynketh me
And of suche thyng were gode for to telle
ye quod oure hoost by seint poules belle
ye say right soth this monke clappith loude
He spake how fortune couered with a cloude
I wot neuiz what, and als of a tragedy
Right now ye herd and parde no remedy
It is for to be wayle ne compleyne
That. that is doon, and eke it is a peyne

The Monkes tale

As ye haue seyd to here of heuynes
Sir monke no more of this so god you blesse
youre tale anoyeth alle this comoany
Suche talkyng is nat worth a butter flye
For therein is no disporte ne game
Wherfore sir monke or dan piers by your name
I pray you hartely telle vs som what elles
For sikerly ner clynkyng of your belles
That on your brydel hangge on euery syde
By heuynkyng that for vs alle deyde
I shorde or this haue fallen down for slepe
Alle though the slough hadde neuiz be so depe
Than hadde your tale alle be tolde in beyng
For certayntly as that the se clerkes sayn
Where as a man may haue none audience
Nat helpith it to telle his sentence
And wele I wote the substaunce is in me
If any thyng shalle wele reported be
Sir say som what of huntynge I you pray
My quod this monke I haue nolyst to pley
Now let a nother telle as I haue tolde
Than spake oure hoost with rude speche and bolde
And sayd to the nonnes preest anon
Come nere thou preest come hydez thou sir John
Tel vs suche thyng as may oure hertes glade
Be blythe though thou ryde vpon a iade
What though thy horse be foule and lene
If he wol serue the recke the nat a bene
Loke that thy hert be mery euir mo
yes sir quod he yes hoost so moot I go
But I be mery y wys I wol be blamed
And right anoon his tale he hath attampd
And thus he sayd vnto vs euerichone

The tale of the nonnes preest

This swete preest this godely man sir John

Here endith the prologue of the nonnes preest
And begynneth his tale



a poure wydowe somdele y stept in age
Was somtyme duellyng in a cotage
Besyde a groue stondyng in a dale
This wydowe of whiche I telle you my tale
Sithen that day that she was last a wyf
In pacience ledde a ful symple lyf
For lytel was her catel and her rent
By husbandry of suche as god her sent
She fonde her self and eke her doughtren two
Thre larte sowes hadde she and no moo
Thre kyne and eke a shepe that hight malle
Wele soty was her boure and eke her halke
In whiche she ete many a slender mele

The tale of the Nonnes prest

Of poynaunt sawce ne knewe she neuir a deel
Ne depnte morcel passed through her throte
Her dyet was accordaunt to her cote
Repleccioun ne made her neutz seke
A temperat dyet was her phisik
And excercise and hertis suffisaunce
The gowte leet her nothyng for to daunce
Ne apoplevie shent nat her hede
No wyne ne dranke she neyther white ne rede
Her lord was moost seruyd with white and blak
Applke and broun brede in whiche she fonde no lak
Seynd. Bacon and somtym an egg or twey
And she was as it wer a maner dey
A yerd she hadde enclosed alle aboute
With styches and dry dyched withoute
In whiche she hadde a cocke hight chaunteclere
In alle the lond of crowyng nas his pere
His boyce was meriaz than the mery ozgon
On masse dayes that in the churches goon
Wele spherer was his crowyng in his loge
Than is a clocke or in any abbey an ozlogge
By nature he crewe eche assencion
Of the equynoccion in the toung
For whan degrees systene were ascendyd
Than crewe he that it myght nat be amended
His come was reder than the syne coralle
And battelyd as it hadde be a castel walle
His byl was blake as any tete it shone
Lyke a sure were his legges and his toon
His nayles whytter than the lily floure
And lyke the burnyd golde was his coloure
This gentyl cok had in his gouernaunce
Seuyh hennys to do alle his plesaunce

The tale of the nonnes preeft

Whiche were his susters and his paramoures
And wondre lyke to him as of coloures
Of whiche the fayrest he wed in the throte
Was clepyd fayre damysel parlote
He fetred her an hundred tyme a day
And she him pleisith alle that euiz she may
Curteys she was discrete and debonayre
And compenable and her self so fayre
Sithen the tyme that she was seyn nyght old
That truly she hath the hert in holde
Of chauntecleres lokyng in euery lith
He louyd her so that wele was him ther with
But suche a ioye it was to here them syng
Whan the bright sone gan to spryng
In swete accorde my leef is sez in lond
For that tyme as I haue vnderstonde
Bestys and byrdes coude speke and syng
And it so fyl that in the dawnyng
As chaunteclere among his byues alle
Sat on his perche that was in the halles
And nexte him sat his fayre partlote
This chaunteclere gan to trome in his throte
As a man in his dreame is dretchyd sore
And whan that partlote thus herde him roze
She was agast and sayd hert dere
What ayleth you to trome in this manere
Ye be a very slepar fy for shame
And he aunswerd thus and sayd madame
I pray you that ye take it nat in greef
By god I mette I was in suche myscheif
Right now that yet myn hert is sore a frichte
Now god quod he my sweyn retche a right
And kepe my body oute of foule pryson

The tale of the Nonnes preeft

Me mette that I roumed by and down
Within oure yerde where I saue a best
Was lyke an hounde and wolde haue made a rest
Upon my body and wolde haue hadde me dede
His coloure was betwixte yelow and rede
And tyyyyd was his tayle and bothe his eris
With blache vnyke the remenaunt of his heris
His snowte smalle with glowyng eyen tway
yet for his loke almost for fere I dey
This causith me my gromyng doutles
Abov quod she fy for shame hertles
Allas quod she for by god aboue
Now haue ye lost myn hert and al my loue
I can nat loue a cowerd by my seyth
For certis what so any woman sayth
We alle desire if it myght be
To haue husbondes hardy wyse and fre
And secrete and none negarde ne no fool
Ne him that is agast of euery tool
Ne none auauntour by that god aboue
How durst ye say for shame vnto youze loue
That any thyng myght make thou a ferde
Haue ye no mannes hert and haue a berde
Allas and can ye be a ferde of sweynnes
No thyng but banyte god wote in sweyn is
Sweynnes been engendred of repleccions
And of fume and of complexions
Whan humoures been to habundaunt in a wight
Certis this dreame whiche ye haue mette to nyght
I telle you trouthe ye may trust me
Cometh of superfluyte and rede coler parde
Whiche cause folke to drede in their dremps
Of arrows and of fyre with rede lemys

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Of rede bestys that wol them byte
Of contyke and of waspes grete and lyte
Right as the humoure of melancoly
Causeth many a man in slepe to cry
For fere of grete boles and berys blake
Or elles blake deuyles wol them take
Of othez humoures coude I telle also
That worke a man in slepe mekyl wo
But I wol passe as lyghtly as I can
Pocaton whiche that was so wyse a man
Sayde he nat thus do no force of dremps
Now sir quod she whan we fle fro the bempys
For goddes loue as takith som layatyf
Opon peryl of my soule and of my lyf
I counsel you the best I wol nat lye
That bothe of coler and of melancoly
ye purge you and for ye shal nat tary
Though in this toun be none appotecary
I shal my self two herbes teche you
That shal be for your hele and for your prow
And in oure yerde tho herbes shal I fynde
The whiche haue of their properte by kynde
To purge you bene th and eke aboue
For yet nat this for goddes owne loue
ye be right colorph of complexioun
Where the sonne is in his ascencioun
Ne fynde you nat replete of humoures hote
For if ye do I dar wele lay a grote
Than ye shal haue a feyur tercian
Or elles an agewe that may be your bane
A day or two ye shalle haue digestyues
Of wormes or ye take your layatius
Of laurealcentory and of fumetere

Of elles of the elderberies that growyn there
 Of catapuce oz of gaytres beryes
 Of herbe sue growyng in oure yerde that mery is
 Pluche them bp as they growe and ete them in
 Be mery husbonde for your fader kyn
 Dredith no dre me I can say you no more
 Madame quod he gramercy of your loze
 But natheles as touchyng dan catoun
 That of wysdome hath suche a grete renoun
 Though he hadde no dremes for to drede
 By god men may in olde bokes rede
 Of many a man more of auctozite
 Than euir dan caton was so moot I the
 That alle the reuers sayth of his sentence
 And haue wele founde by experie nce
 That dremys be significaciouns
 As wele of ioye as of tribulaciouns
 That folke endure in this lyf present
 There nedith to make of this none argument
 The very preef she with it in dede
 One of the gretest auctouzes that men rede
 Sayth thus that somtyme two felowes went
 On pylgramage in ful gode entent
 And hapned so they cam in a toun
 Where as ther was suche congregacioun
 Of people and eke of strayt herbitage
 That they ne fonde as mehyl as a cotage
 In whiche they bothe myght y lottyd be
 Wherfore they must of necessite
 As for that nyght departe company
 And eche of them goth to his hostrye
 And toke his lottynge as it wolde falle
 That one of them was lottyd in a stalle

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Fere in the yerde With oxen of the plow
That othez man was logyd wele ynow
As was his auenture oz his fortune
That vs gouerneth alle as in comune
And so it besyl long oz it were day
This man mette in his bedde there he lay
How that his felowe gan vpon him callie
And sayd allas for in an oyes stalle
This nyght shal I be murdered there I ly
Now helpe me dere Brothez oz I dye
In alle the haste come to me he sayd
This man oute his slepe for fere abrayde
And whan he was waked of his slepe
He turned him and toke of this no hepe
Him thought his dreame was but a banyte
Thus twyse in his slepe dremyd he
And at the thridde tyme yet his fela we
Cam as him thought and sayde I am now slaw
Beholde my bloody woundes depe and wyde
Arise vp arely in the morowe tyde
And at the west gate of the toun quod he
A carte ful of dung there shalt thou se
In whiche my body is hydde fulle pryuelly
Do that cart arest holdly
My gold causyd my deth soth to sayn
And tolde him euery poynt how he was slayn
With a fulle pytous face pale of he we
And trust wele his dreame he fonde right trewe
For on the morowe as sone as it was day
To his felowes ynne he toke the wey
And whan that he cam to the oyes stalle
After his felow he gan to calle
The hostellez aunswerd him anon

The tale of the Nonnes preest

And sayd sir youre fellow is goon
As sone as day he went out of the town
This man gan fal in suspencion
Remembryng of his dremys that he mette
And forth he goth no lenger wolde he let
Vnto the west gate of the town and fonde
A dong carte as it were to dong londe
That was arayed in the same wyse
As ye haue herde the dede man deuyse
And with hardy hert he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and iustice of this felony
My felowe murdered is this same nyght
And in this carte he lyeth gappng by right
I crye oute on the mynistres quod he
That sholde kepe and rule this cyte
Harow allas here lyeth my felowe slayn
What sholde I more of this tale sayn
The peple oute stert and cast the carte to grounde
And in the myddel of the donge they fonde
The dede man than murdered was al newe
O blisful god that art so gode and trewe
Lo how that thou bewrayest murdre alwey
Murdre wol oute that se we day by day
Murdre is so waltson and abhomynable
To god that so iuste is and resonable
That he ne wol it suffre helyd to be
Though it abyde a yere or two or thre
Murdre wol oute this is my conclusioun
And right anon the mynisters of the town
Haue hent the cartez and so soze him pynd
And eke the hosteller so soze entyned
That they behewe theire wychednes anon
And were anhangyd by the necke boon

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Here may ye se that dremps be to drede
And certis in the same lyf I rede
Right in the nexte chaptre after this
I gabbe nat so haue I ioye and blys
t Wo men that wolde haue passed ouir the see
For certayn causes in a fer countre
If the Wynde ne hadde be contrarye
That made them in a cyte to tary
That stode ful mery vpon an hauyn syde
But on a day ayenst an euyn tyde
The Wynde gan chaunge and blewe as himlest
Joly and glade they wenten to rest
And cast them ful erely for to sayle
But herkyng to one man fylle a grete meruayle
That one of them in slepyng as he lay
He mette a wondre dreme agan the day
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde
And him comaunded that he sholde abyde
And sayd him thus if thou to morowe wende
Thou shalt be drent my tale is at an ende
He woke and tolde his fela we what he mette
And prayde him his viage for to lette
As for that day he prayde him for to abyde
His fela we that lay by his beddes syde
Gan for to laughe and scorned him fulle faste
No dreme quod he may so my hert agast
That I wol let for to do my thynges
I set nat a strawe for thy drempnynges
For sweennes be but wanytees and iapes
Men mete alday of oules and of apes
And eke of many a mase therwith alle
And dreme of thyng that neuir was ne shalle
But sithen I se that thou wol here abyde

The tale of the Nonnes preest

And thus slouther Wylfully the tyde
God wote it reWith me fulle soze and haue gode day
And thus he toke his leue and went his way
But or he hadde half his course y sayled
I nat why ne what myschaunce it ayled
But casually the shippes botom to rent
And ship and man vndre the water went
In sight of othez shippes besyde
That with him sayled at the same tyde
And therfore sayze partelot so dere
By suche ensamples olde mayst thou here
That no man sholde be to rechelesse
Of dremps for I say the doutles
That many a dreme ful soze is for to drede
Lo in the lyf of seint kenelme I rede
That was henulphus sone the noble kyng
Of meriturph how kenelme met a thyng
A lytel or he were murdered on a day
His murdre in his visioun he say
His nozice him expounded it euery dele
His sweyn and bad him kepe him wele
Iro treson but he was but seyn yere olde
And therfore lytel tale he hath therof tolde
Of any dreme so holy was his herte
By god I hadde leuyz than my sherte
That ye had herde his legende as haue I
Dame partlot I say to you trully
Macrobius that writeth the a visioun
In affryke of the worthy scypioun
Affermyth dremps and sayth that they been
Warnyng of the thynges that we after seen
And ferthermore I pray you lohit wele
In the osde testament of danyel

The tale of the Nonnes preest

If he held dremps any banpte
Rede eke of Joseph and there shal ye se
Wondres been somtyme but I say nat alle
Warnyng of thynges that shal after falle
Lo of egypt the kyng that hight pharo
His baker and his hoteller also
Whether they felt none effect in dremps
Who so wol seke actes of sondry reamps
May rede of dremes a wondre thyng
Croesus whiche was of Lyde kyng
Mette he nat that he sat vpon a tre
Whiche signified he sholde hanged be
Lo Andrometa Hectoures wyf
That day that Hectour sholde lese his lyf
She drempd in the same nyght biforn
How that the lyf of Hectoure sholde be lorn
If that day he went vnto batayle
She warnyd him but it myght nat auayle
He went for to fight natheles
But he was slayn a noon of achilles
But that tale is to long to telle
And eke it is nyght day I may nat duelle
Shortly I say as for conclusioun
That I shalle haue of this auysoun
Aduersite and I say furthermore
That I ne telle of layatpues no store
For they be benemous I wote it wel
I them diffy I loue them neuiz a deel
But now let vs speke of myrthe and stynt al this
Madame partlote so haue I blys
Of one thyng god hath me sent large grace
For whan I se the beaute of your face
Ye be so scarlet rede aboute your eyen

The tale of the Nonnes preest

It makith al my drede for to dven
For also sykez as in principio
Nuliez est hominis confusio
Madame the sentence of this latyn is
Woman is mannes ioye and his blysse
For when I fele on nyght your soft syde
Al be it that I may nat on you ryde
For that oure perche is made so narrow allas
I am so ful of ioy and of solas
That I diffy bothe sweene and dreme
And with that worde he fyl down fro the beme
For it was day and eke his hennes alle
And with a chuk he gan them for to calle
For he hadde founde a corne lay in the yerde
Byalle he was and he no man aferde
He fedred partelote tWenty tyme
And trade her eke as ofte oz it was pryme
He loketh as he were a trympoun
And on his toos he rometh by and down
Him deyned nat to set his feet to grounde
And chucked whan he hadde a corne y founde
And to him ran his wyues alle
As ryalle as a prynce in his halke
Leue I this chaunteclere in his pasture
And after wol I telle of his auenture
Whan the moneth in the whiche the worlde began
That hight Marche that god first made man
Was complete and passyd were also
Sithen Marche began tWenty daies and tWo
Besyl that chaunteclere in alle his pryde
His seyn hennes walkyng him besyde
Cast by his eyen to the bright sonne
That in the signe of taurus was y ronne

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Fourty degrees and one and som what more
He knewe by kynde and by noon other loze
That it was pryme and crewe With a blifful steurn
The sonne he sayde is clombe by to heurn
Fourty degrees and one and som wat more ywys
Madame partlote my worlde's blys
Herkyng how this blifful byrdes syng
And se the fresshe floures how they spryng
ful is myn herte of reuel and solas
But sodenly him fyl a sozonful caas
For euir the lattre ende of ioye is woo
God wot that worldly ioye is sone ago
And if a rethoure coude fayre endite
He in a cronycle myght sauely wryte
As for a souerayn notabilite
Now euery wiseman herkyng to me
This stoyr is also trewe I vndertake
As is the boke of Launcelot de lake
That women holde in ful grete reuerence
Now wol I turne apen to my sentence
A col fox ful of slighht and iniquyte
That in the groue hadde woned yeres thre
By high ymaginacion a forncast
The same nyght through the hedghe brast
Vnto the yerde there chaunteclere the fayre
Was wont and eke his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes stylle he lay
Tyl it was past vndren of the day
Waytynge his tyme on chaunteclere to falle
As gladelly doon these homycides alle
That in a wayte lytthe to murdre men
A false murdrez ruckynge in the den
D new scariot and newe genesion

The tale of the Nonnes preest

False dissimyloure offreke Synon
That broughtest troye bitterly to sorowe
Dclaunteclere acursed be the morow
That thou in the yerde fley fro the Bemys
Thou were ful wele warnyd by thy dremps
That ilke day was perilous to the
But what that god afore wote must nedes be
After the opunyon of certayn clerkes
Wytnes of him that any clerke is
That in scole is grete alteracioun
In this mater and grete disputacioun
And hath been of an hundred thousand men
But I ne can nat bulke it to the brenne
As can the holy doctoure augustyn
Or boece or the bissshop bradwardyn
Whethyr that goddes worthy fore wetynge
Streyneth me nedely to do a thyng
Nedely clepe I symple necessite
Or if the fre choos be graunted me
To do that same thyng or do it noughht
Though god fore wote it or it was wrought
Or if his wyttyng streyneth neuir a dele
But by necessite condicioneel
I wol nat haue doon in suche matere
My tale is of a cok as ye shal here
That toke his counseyl of his wyf with sorowe
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe
That he hadde met his dreame as I you tolde
Womens counceles been ful oft colde
Wymens counceyl brought vs first to wo
And made Adam from paradise to go
There as he was ful mery and wele at ease
But for I not whom I myght displease

The tale of the Nonnes preest

If I counceyl of Women wolde blame
Passe ouir for I sayde it in my game
Redith auctouzes Where they trete of suche matere
And what they say of Women ye may here
These been these coches wordes and nat myn
I can no harme of no Woman deuyne
Frayre in the sonde to bathe hez merily
Pyeth partelot and al hez susters by
Apenst the sonne and chaunteclere so fre
Sang meriaz than the mazmayde in the see
For phisologus sayth btterly
How that they songe wele and merely
And so besyl as he cast his eye
Amongt the wortes on a Butterflye
He was ware of this foy that lay ful lowe
No thyng than lust him to crowe
But cryed anoon coche cok and by he stert
As man that was a frayde in his hert
For naturallly a best desireth to fle
Fro his contrary if he may it se
Though he neuir hadde seen it erst With his eye
This chaunteclere whan he gan him aspy
He wolde haue fledde but that the foy anon
Sayd gentyl sif allas what wyl ye doon
Be ye a frayde of me that am youre frende
Now certis I were wers than a feend
If I to you wolde harme or belony
I am nat come youre counseyl to aspye
But truly the cause of my comynt
Was only to here how ye syng
For truly ye haue as mery a steuyn
As any aungel hath that is in heuyn
Therwith ye haue of musyke more felyng

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Than hadde boece or any that can syng
My lordre youre fader god his soule blesse
And eke your modre of her gentylnes
Haue in my house be to my grete ease
And certis sir ful fayne wolde I you please
But for men speke of syngyng I wolde say
So moot I brouke wele myn eyen tway
Saue you ne herd I neur man so syng
As dyd your fader in the moornyng
Certis it was of herte alle the song
And for to make his voyce the more strong
He wolde so peyne him that with bothe his eyen
He must swynke so loude he must cryen
And stonde vpon his typtoos therwithalle
And stretch forth his necke long and smalle
And eke he was of suche discrecioun
That ther was no man in no regioun
That him in song or wysdome myght passe
I haue wele redde dan burnel the asse
Among his berse how that there was a cok
For that a prestes sone gaue him a knoke
Vpon his leggyss whiche he was yong and nyce
He made him for to lese his benefice
But certeyn there is no comparison
Betwyte the wysdome and discrecioun
Of youre fader and of his subtelte
Now syngith sir for seint charite
Let se can ye your fadre countrefete
This chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete
As man that coude nat his treason aspye
So was he rauysshed with his flaterie
Alas ye lordes many a false flateroure
Is in your courte and many a false losyngeour

The tale of the Nonnes preest

That please you moche more by my feyth
Than he that sothfastnes vnto sayth
Redith ecclesiaste of flaterie
Be ware ye lordes of theire trechery
This chaunteclere stood vpon his toos
Stretchyng his necke and helde his eyncloos
And gan to crowe loude for the nones
And dan russel the fox stert vp at onys
And be gorget hent chaunteclere
And on his bake toward the wode him bere
And yet was ther no man that him sued
Desteny that mayst nat be eschewed
Alas that chaunteclere flewe fro the bemys
Alas his wyfraught nat of dremys
And on a fryday fyl alle this myschaunce
O venus that art goddes of pleasaunce
Sithen that thy seruant was this chaunteclere
And in thy seruyce dyd alle his powere
More for delyte than the worlde to multiply
Why woldest thou suffre him thy day to dye
O gaufride dere mayster souerayn
That whan the worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot compleyndest his deth so soze
Why ne hadde I thy science and thy loze
The friday for to chyde as dyd ye
For on a friday shortly slayn was he
Than wolde I shewe you how that I coude pleyne
For chaunteclere drede and for his peyne
Certis suche crye ne lamentacioun
Was neuiz of ladies made whan that Iriou
Was wonne. and pirzus with his bright swerde
Whan he hent kyng pryame by the berde
And flewe him as sayth eneydos

The tale of the Nonnes preest

As made al the hennys in the cloos
When that they hadde of chaunteclere the sight
But soueranly dame partelote shright
ful lowder than dyd hasdrubales wyf
Whan that her husbonde had lost his lyf
And that the Romaynes hadde brent cartage
She was so ful of tument and of rage
That wylfully into the fyre she stert
And brent her self with a stedefast hert
O woful hennys right so cryden ye
As whan that nero brent the cyte
Of Rome cryde the senatoures wyues
For that their husbondes sholde lese their lyues
Withouten gylt nero hath them slayn
Now wol I turne to my tale agayn
This sely wydowe and her doughters two
Berde the hennes crye and make wo
And oute at the doze stert they anoon
And sawe the foy towarde the wode goon
And bare vpon his bake the coche a wey
Any cryde oute and harowe and wela wey
A ha the foy and after him they ran
And eke with staues many an othez man
Ran colle oure dogge talbot and garlond
And malkyn with her distaf in her honde
Ran cow and calf and eke the the very hogges
For they so soze a ferde were of the dogges
And shoutyng of men and of women eke
They ran so theire hert thought to breke
They yellen as feendes doon in helle
The dokes cryde as men wolde them quelle
The gees for fere ouir the trees
Oute of the hyues the swarme of bees

The tale of the Nonnes preeft

So hidous was the noyse a benedicite
Certis Iacke st ra we ne his menye
Ne made neuir shoutes half so shrille
Whan that they wolde any flemyng kylle
As that day was made vpon the foy
Of bras they blewe the trompes and of boy
Of horn and bone in which they blewe and poupyd
And ther with they shrieked and shoutyd
It semyd as though heuyñ sholde falle
Now gode men I pray you her kyn alle
Lo how fortune turneth sodenly
The hope and the pryde of her enmye
This cocke that lay vpon the foyes backe
In alle his dride vnto the foy he spake
And sayd sir if I were as ye
yet shoulde I say as wys god helpe me
Turneth a yen ye proude chorles alle
A very pestilence vpon you falle
Now am I come vnto this wode syde
Gaugre your hede the cocke shal here abyde
I wyl him ete in feyth and that anoon
The foy aunswerd in feyth it shalbe doon
And as he spake the worde alle sodenly
This cocke brake from his mouthe deliuerly
And high vpon a tre he flewe anoon
And whan the foy sa we that he was goon
Allas quod he o chaunteclere allas
I haue quod he do to you grette tre spaas
In as moche as I made you a ferde
When I you hent and brought oute of youze yerde
But sir I dyd it nat in no wyched entent
Come down and I shal telle you what I ment
I shalle you say soth god helpe me so

The tale of the Nonnes preest

May than quod he; I shrewe vs both two
And first I shrewe my self bothe blode and bones
If thou begyle me oster than ones
Thou shalt nomoze with thy slatery
Do me syng with a wynkyng eye
For he that wynketh when he sholde se
Al wylfully god let him neuir the
May quod the foy but god geue him myschaunce
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce
That iangeleth whan he sholde holde his pees
So suche it is for to be recheles
And neglegent and truste on slatery
And ye that holde this tale a foly
As of a foy and a cocke and an henne
Takith the moralite good men
For seint poule sayth alle that writen is
To oure doctrine it is writen y wys
Takith the fruyte and let the chaffe be styll
Now gode god if that it be thy wylle
As saythe my lorde god make vs alle gode men
And bryng vs to thy high blysse amen

Here begynneth the maniciples prologue

I In nonnes preest oure hoost sayde a noon
y blessed be thy breche and euery stoon
This a mery tale of chaunteclere
But by my trowth if thou were seculere
Thou woldest be a tredfoule a right
For if thou haue corage as thou hast myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
ye more than seupn tymes seuentene
Se whiche braunes hath this hentyl preest
So grete a necke and suche a large brest
He lokith as a sparhaue with his eyen

The manciple's prologue

Him nedith nat his coloure for to dyen
With brasyl ne with grayn of portyngale
But sif fayre falle you for youre tale
And after that he with ful mery chere
Sayd vnto an man as ye shalle here
Wot ye nat where there stondith a lytel town
Whiche that is clepyd bob by and down
Vndre the blee in caunterbery way
There gan oure hoost to iape and to pley
And sayd sires what dun is in the myre
Is there no man for prayez ne for hyre
That wol awake oure felow behynde
A theef myght him ful lyghtly robbe and bynde
Se how he nappith se for coches bones
How he wol falle from his horse at onys
Is that a coke of london with myschaunce
Do him comfort he knowith his penaunce
For he shalle tel a tale by my fay
Al though it be nat worth a hotel hay
Awake thou coke quod he god gyue the sorowe
What ayleth the to slepe by the morowe
Hast thou hadde fleen al nyght or art thou dronke
Or hast thou al nyght with somme quene y swonke
So that thou mayst nat holde by thy hede
This cook that was ful pale and nothyng rede
Sayde oure hoost so god my soule blesse
There is falle on me grete heuynes
Nat I nat why me were leuer to slepe
Then the best galon of wyne in chepe
Wele quod the manciple if may do the ease
To the sir coke and to no wight wight displease
Whiche that here ryde in this company
And if oure hoost wol of his curtesy

I wol as now excuse the of thy tale
 For in gode feyth thy bysage is ful pale
 Thyn eyen dasa wen sothtly as me thynketh
 And wele I wote thy breth ful soure stynketh
 That she with wele thou art nat wele disposed
 Of me certayn thou shalt nat be glosed
 Se how he galpith. lo this dronken witht
 As though he wolde vs swelw anoon right
 Holde croos thy mouthe for thy fader kyn
 The deupl of helle set his fote therin
 Thy cursed breth wol enfecte vs alle
 Fy stynkynng swyne fy foule moot the be falle
 Takith hede sires of this lusty man
 Now swete sir wol ye iuste at the ban
 Therto me thynketh ye be wele shape
 I trowe that ye haue dronke wyne ape
 And that is whan men pley at the strawe
 And with his speche the cook weyed al wra we
 And on the manicle he gan to nodde fast
 For lacke of speche a down the horse him cast
 Where as he lay tyl that men him by toke
 This was a fayre cheuesauce of a cook
 Allas that he ne hadde holde him by his ladyl
 And oz that he ayen were in his sadyl
 There was a grete shouyng bothe to and fro
 To lyft him by and mekyl care and wo
 So brweldy was this sely palled goost
 And to the manicle than spake oure hoost
 Bicause that drynke hath dominacioun
 Upon this man. by my sauacioun
 I trowe lewdely wol he telle his tale
 For were it wyne oz olde moyste ale
 That he hath dronke he spekieth so in his nose

The manicles prologue

And fneſith faſt and eke he hath the poſe
He hath alſo to do more than ynough
To kepe him on his caple oute of the ſlough
And if he falle from his caple i ſtone
Than ſhal we alle haue ynough to done
By lyſtynge by his dronken corps
Tel on thy tale of him make I no force
But yet manciple in feyth thou arte to nyce
Thus openly to reprove him of his byce
Another day he wol paraventure
Reclayme the and brynge the to lure
I mene he ſpeke wyl of ſmale thynges
And for to pynche at thy recknynges
That were nat honeſt if it cam to the preef
No quod the maunciple that were a grette myſchief
So myght he brynge me in to the ſnare
yet haode I leuez pay for the mare
Whiche he rideth on than he ſholde with me ſtryue
I wol nat wrathe him ſo moot I thryue
That I ſpake I ſayde it but in bourde
And wote ye what I haue here in my gourde
A draught of wyne ye of a rype grape
And right anoon ye ſhal ſe a gode iape
This cook ſhal drynke therof if that I may
By payne of my lyf he wol nat ſay nay
And certaynly to telle as it was
Of this beſſel the cook dranke faſt alas
What nedith it he dranke ynough bifoze
And whan he hadde poupyd in his horn
To the manciple he toke the gourde agayn
And of the drynke the cooke was ful fayn
And thanked him in ſuche wyſe as he coude
Than gan oure hoost to laughe wondre loude

The manciples tale

And sayde I se wele it is necessary
Where that we goon gode drynke with vs to cary
For that wol turne rancor and disease
To accorde and loue and many a worde to pease
O bacus y blissed be thy holy name
That so canst turne earnest into game
Worship and thanke be to thy deyte
Of that matere ye gete no more of me
Tel on thy tale thou manciple I the pray
Wele sir quod he herkneþ what I say

Here endith the manciples prologue
And begynneth his tale



Whan phebus duellyd here in erthe a doun
As olde bokes maken mencion
He was the moost lusty bachelere
Of alle the worlde and eke the best archere
He slewe pheton the serpent as he lay
Slepyng ayenst the sonne bpon a day
And many a nother noble worthy dede

The manicles tale

He With his Bowe Wrought as men may rede
Plepe he coude on euery mynstralcye
And syngen that it was a melody
To here of his clere voyce the soun
Certis the kynng of Thebes amphion
That With his song walled the cyte
Coude neuiz syng half so wele as he
Therto he was the semelpest man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
What nedith it his feture to discryue
For in this worlde was there no man so fayre alpye
He was ther With fulfilled of gentylnes
Of honoure and of parfytte worthynes
This phebus that was floure of bachelery
As wele in fredom as in cheualry
For his disporte in signe eke of victory
Of pheton so as tellith vs the story
was wont to here in his honde a bowe
Now hadde this phebus in his house a crowe
Within a cage y fostryd many a day
And taughte it speke as men teche a iay
White was this crowe as is a mylke whyte swan
And countrefetyd the speche of euery man
He coude whan he shulde telle a tale
There was in alle this worlde no nyghtyngale
Ne coude by an hundred thousand dele
Synge so wonderly merily and wele
Now hadde this phebus in his house a wyf
Whiche that he louyd more than his lyf
And nyght and day dyd euiz his diligence
For to please and do her reuerence
Saue only the soth if I shalle sayn
Ielous he was and wolde haue kept her fayne

The manicles tale

For him were lothe iaped for to be
And so is euery wight in suche degre
But al for naught for it auayled nought
A gode wyf that is clene of werke and thought
Sholde nat be kept in noon a wayte certayn
And truly the labour is in beyn
To kepe a shrewe for it wol nat be
This holde I for a verzy nycte
To spylle labour for to kepe wyues
Thus writen olde clerkes in theire lyues
But now to purpos as I first began
This worthy phebus doth alle that he can
To plesen her wenyng through suche plesaunce
And for his manhode and for his gouernaunce
That no man sholde put him fro her grace
But god it wote there may no man embrace
As to distreyne a thyng whiche that nature
Hath naturally set in a creature
Take any byrde and put him in a cage
And do alle thyng entent and thy corage
To fostre it tenderly with mete and drynke
Of al deyntees that thou canst be thynke
And kepe it al so clenly as thou may
Al though his cage of golde be neuir so gay
yet hath this byrde by twenty thousand folde
Reuer in a forest that is wylde and colde
Goete wormes and suche wrechidnesse
For euir this byrde wol do his besynesse
To a scape oute of his cage whan he may
His liberte the byrde desireth ay
Let take a cat and fostre her with mylke
And tendre flesshe and make her couche of silke
And let her se a mouse go by the walle

The maniciples tale

Anoon she weyueth flesshe and couche and al
And euery deynthe that is in that house
Suche appetyte hath she to ete the mous
To here hath lust his domynacioun
And appetyte flemyth discrecioun
A she wolf hath also a bypens kynde
The lewdest wolf that she may synde
Or leest of reputacion that wyf she take
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make
Al these ensamples speke I By these men
That been vntrue and nothyng by women
For men haue euir a licorous appetyte
Or lower thyng to parfourme their delyte
Than on their wyues be they neuir so fayr
Ne neuir so true ne neuir so debonayre
Flesshe is so newfangle with myschaunce
That we ne can in no thyng haue plessaunce
That so wneeth vnto vertue any while
Thus phebus whiche that thought no gyle
Disceyued was for alle his iolite
For vndre him a nother hadde she
A man of lytel reputacioun
Nought worth to phebus in comparisoun
The more harme is. it happith oft so
Of whiche there cometh moche harme and wo
And so besyl whan phebus was absent
His wyf anoon hath for her lemman sent
Her lemman certes that is a knauysse speche
For yeue it me and that I you beseeche
The wyse plato sayth as ye may rede
The worde must nede accorde with the dede
If men shorde telle propirly a thyng
The worde must cosyn be to the workyng

The manicles tale

I am a boystous man right thus say I
There is but lytel difference truly
Betwyte a wyf that is of high degre
If of her body dishonest she be
And a pore wenche othez than this
If it so be they werke bothe a mys
But that the gentyl is in state aboue
She shal be clepyd his lady and his loue
And for that othez is a poure woman
She shalle be clepyd his wenche or his lemman
And god it wote myn owne dere brothez
Men lay as so we that one as that othez
Right so betwyte a tytles tyraunt
And an outlaue or a theef er raunt
The same I say there is no difference
To Alisaundre was tolde this sentence
That for the tyraunt is of gretez myght
By force of meyne to slee down a right
And brenne house and hoom and make al playn
So therfore is he clepyd a capdeyn
And for the outelaue hath but smalle menye
And may nat do so grete an harme as he
Ne bryng a countre to so grete myschief
Men clepe him an outlaue or a theef
But for I am a man nat textuele
I wol nat telle of textes neuir a deel
I wol go to my tale as I began
Whan phebus wyf hadde sent for her lemman
Anoon they wrought alle their lust volage
This white crowe that hyntg ay in the cage
Behelde their werke and sayde neuir a worde
And whan home was come phebus the lorde
This crowe song cuckow cuckow cuckow

The manicles tale

What Byrde quod phebus What syngeſt thou
Ne were thou nat wont ſo merily to ſyng
That to my herte it was a reioyſyng
To here this boyce allas what ſong is this
By god quod he I ſyng nat a mys
Phebus quod he for alle thy worthynes
For alle thy beaute and thy gentylnes
For al thy ſong and alle thy mynſtralcye
For al thy waytyng bleryd is thy eye
With one of lytel reputacioun
Nat worth to the in comparifoun
The mountenaunce of a gnat ſo moot I thryue
For on thy bedde thy wyf I ſawe him ſwyue
What wol ye more the crowe a noon him tolde
By ſadde toknes and by wordes holde
How that his wyf hadde doon her lechery
Him to grette ſhame and to grette belong
And tolde him eft he ſawe it with his eyen
This phebus gan a waywarde for to pryen
Him thought his woful hert braſt a two
His bowe he bent and ſet therein a flo
And in his ire he hath his wyf ſlayn
This is the effecte ther is more to ſayn
For ſorow wherof he brake his mynſtralcye
Bothe harpe and lute geterne and ſawtry
And eke he brake his arowes and his bowe
And after that thus ſpake he to the crowe
Traytoure quod he with tongue of ſcorpion
Thou haſt me brought to my confuſioun
Allas that I was wrought why nere I dede
O dere wyf o gemme o luſtihede
That were to me ſo ſadde and eke to trewe
Nowlyeſt thou dede with face pale of hewe

The manicles tale

Ful gyltles that durst I swere y bys

Drabel honde to do so foule amys

Dr trouble wytte o ire rechelesse

That vnauysed synnest gyltles

Dr wantrust fülle of false suspencion

Where was thy wytte and thy discrecion

Deuery man be ware of rechelnes

Ne trowe no thyng withoute strong wytnes

Smyte nat to sone or thou wytte why

And be auysed wele and sikerly

Dr ye do any execucion

Vpon poure ire for suspencion

Allas a thousand fothe haue rehyr ire

Fully fordoon and brought them in the myre

Allas for sorowe I wol my self slee

And to the crowe o false theef sayde he

I wol quyte anoon thy false tale

Thou song whitom lyke a nyghtyngale

Now shalt thou false theef thy song forzgon

Eke thy white fetheres euerichone

Ne neuir in al thy lyf shalt thou speke

Thus shal men on a traytoure be wreke

Thou and thyh offspring euir shal be blake

Ne neuir swete noyes shal ye make

But euir crye apenst tempest and rayne

In token that through the my wyf is slayn

And to the crowe he stert and that anoon

And pulled of his white fetheres euerichone

And made him blake and rest him al his song

And eke his speche and oute at the doze him stong

Vnto the deuyll whiche I him be take

And for this cause be al crows blake

For dynges by the se ensamples I wol you pray

The manicles tale

Be Ware and take kepe what I say
Ne tellith neuir no man in pourelp
Ho w that a nother man hath dight his wif
He wol you hate mortally certayn
Dan Salamon as wyse clerkes sayn
Techith a man to kepe his tongue wele
But as I sayde I am nat textuele
But natheles thus taught me my dame

My sonne thynke on the crowe a goddes name
My sone kepe wele thy tongue and kepe thy frende
A wyched tongue is worse than a feende
My sone from a feende men may them blesse
My sone god of his endeles goodnesse
Walled a tongue with tethe and lyppe eke
For man shorde him auyse what he speke
My sone ful oft for to mekyl speche
Hath many a man be spylt as clerkes teche
But for lytel speche spoken auyse dely
Is no man shent to speke generally
My sone thy tongue sholdest thou restrayn
At al tyme but whan thou doost thy peyne
To speke of god in honoure and prayer

The first bertue sone if thou wylt leze
Is to restreyne and kepe wele thy tongue
Thus lerne children whan they be yong
My sone of mekyl spekyng bn auyse dely
Where lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised
Cometh mekyl harme thus was me taughte
In mekyl speche synne wanteth naught
Wotest thou wherfore a rabel tongue seruyth
Right as a swerde forcutteth and forcaruyth
An arme a tWo my dere sone right so
A tongue cutteth frendshippe alle a tWo

The parsonnes prologue

A iangeler is to god abhomynable
Rede Salamon so wyse and honourable
Rede dauid and his psalmes. rede seneke
My sone speke nat ne with thy hede thou beke
Dissimyl as thou were def if that thou here
The iangeloure spekiþ of parlous matere
The flemynge sayth lerne if that thou lyst
That lytel iangelynge causith grete rest
My sone if thou no wyched worde hast sayd
The dar nat drede for to be bewrayed
But he that hath mysseyde I dar wele sayn
He may by no wey clepe his worde agayn
Thynge that is sayde is sayde and for the it goth
Thoughe him repente or him be neuiz soloth
He is thralle to him to whom he hath sayde
A tale for whiche he is now euyl appayed
My sone be ware and be none autour ne we
Of tydinges whether they be false or trewe
Where so thou come among high or lowe
Kepe wele thy tounge and thynke on the crowe

Here endith the manciples tale
And begynneth the parsones prologue

By that the manciple hadde his tale endyd
The soun fro the southe syde is discended
So lowe that it was nat to my sight
Degrees of fyue and twenty of height
Ten at the cloke it was so as I gesse
For enleuyng foot a lytel more or lesse
My shadowe was at that tyme as there
Of suche feet as my lengith parted were
In sey feet equaly of proporcioun

The parsones prologue

Therwith the mones exaltacioun
I mene Libra alwey gan ascende
As were entrynng in the thorpes ende
For whiche oure hoost as he was wont to tye
Ay in this caas this ioly company
Sayde in this wyse lordynges euerichone
Now lackith vs no tale moze than one
Fulfylled is my sentence and my decre
Who wol now telle a tale let se
Almoost fulfylled is myn ordenaunce
I pray to god so yeue him right gode chaunce
That tellith this tale to vs lustily
Sir preest quod he art thou a bycary
Or art thou a parson say sothe by thy fey
Be what thou be breke thou nat oure play
For euey man saue thou haue tolde his tale
Vnbocke and she we vs what is in thy male
For truly me thynkith by thy chere
Thou sholdest knyght by wele a grete matere
Tel vs a fable anoon for cockes bones
This parson him aunswerd alle at onys
Thou gettyst fable none tolde for me
For poule that writeth to Tymothe
Repreuyth them that wayuen sothfastnes
And techen fables and suche wrechidnes
Why sholde I saue draff oute of my fyre
When I may saue whete if that me lyst
For whiche I say if that ye lyst to here
Moralite and of vertuons matere
And than if ye wyl yeue me audience
I wolde ful fayne at cristes reuerence
Done you leefful plesaunce as I can
But trustith wele I am a sotheryn man

The parsonnes prologue

I can nat geste rum ram ruf by lettre
And god wote ry me holde I But lytel bettre
And therfore if ye lust I Wol nat glose
I Wol you telke a lytel tale in prose
To knytte vp al this feest and make an ende
And Jesu for his grace wytte me sende
To shewe you the wey in this byatte
Of thylke parfyte glorious pylgramage
That hight ierusalem celestiafle
And if ye bouche sauf anon I shalle
Begynne vpon my tale for whiche I pray
Tel poure aups I can no bettre say
But nathelesse this meditacioun
I put it ay vndre correctioun
Of clerkes for I am nat textuelle
I take but the sentence trustith wele
Therfore I make protestacioun
That I Wol stonde to correctioun
Vpon this worde we haue assentyd sone
For as it semyd it was for to doon
To enden in som vertuuous sentence
And for to geue him space and audience
And hadde oure hoost he sholde to him say
That alle we to telke his tale him pray
Dure hoost hadde the wordes for vs alle
Sir preest quod he now sayre moot you be falle
Sayth what ye lyst and we shal gladly here
And with that worde he sayd in this manere
Tellith quod he poure meditacioun
But hastith you the sonne wol adoun
Beth fructuous and that in lytel space
And to do wele god sende you his grace
Here endith the parsonnes prologue

Sic erunt ordine fata —————
Dobys

The Persons tale

And here begynneth his tale.



Iheremie vi. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis. que sit via bona. et ambulare in ea. et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris.

o Dr swete lord God of heuē that no man wyl perisse but wyl that we comē al to the knowlechynge of hym and to the blyssful lyf that is pardurable amoneth vs by the prophete Iheremye þ saith in this wyse. stondeth vpon the weyes. and see & aye ye of olde pathis. that is to saye of olde sentencis whiche is good weye. And walketh in þ weye and þ is refresshyng for youre sowlys. Many ben the weyes spiri- tuel that leden folkē to our lord ihu Cryste. And to the regne of glorie.

Of whiche weyes: There is a ful noble weye and wel couenable whiche may not faylle to man ne to womā that thurgh synne hath misgoon fro the ryght weye of Iherusalem celesti- all. And this weye is cleped peny- tence. Of whiche man shold gladly herken and enquire wyth al his her- te to wete. what is penytence or pe- nance. And wite whens is clepyd penytence. And how many maners ben the actions of werchyng of pe- nytence. And how many spyes the- re be of penytence. and whiche thyn- ges behouen and apperteynen to.

penyence. Saynt ambrose sayth þ
penyence is the pleyng of the man
for the gylte that he hath doo.

And nomore to doo ony thyng for
the whiche hym ought to pleyne.

And som doctor sayth. that penaun-
ce is the weymentyng of man that
forweth for his synne. And pnyeth
hym self for he hath mys don. Peny-
ence wyth certeyn circumstance is
Berry repentaunce of man that hol-
deth hym self in sorowe & other pey-
ne for his gyltes. And for he shal
be Berry penyent. He shal first be-
waylen the synnes that he hath don.
And stedfastly purpose in his herte
to haue shrift of mouth. And to doo
satisfaction and neuer for to do thin-
ge for whiche hym oughte more to
bewayle or complayne. and to con-
tinue in good werkis. Dr ellys his
repentaunte may not auayle. For
as saith saint Isodre. He is a Japar
and a gabbar and not Berry repen-
taunte that estiones doth thyng for
whiche hym oweth to repente ne stin-
te to doo synne. may not auayle.

But neuertheles men shold take ho-
pe that at euery tyme that men fal-
leth be it neuer so ofte that he may a-
ryse thourgh penyence yf he haue
grace.

But certeynly it is grete
doubte. For as sayth Saynt Grego-
re. Synne the ariseth he out of his syn-
ne. that is charged of euyl vsage.

And therfore repentaunte folke that
stynite for to synne and for to lete syn-
ne or synne forlete thym. Holy
chyrche holdeth hem sykter of her sal-

uacion. And he that synneth and
Berryly repenteth hym in hys laste.

Holy chyrche hoppyth hys saluacion
by the grete mercy of our Lord Ihu
Cryste for his repentaunce.

But take ye the sykter and certayn
waye. And now sythe I haue de-
clared yow what thyng is penaunce

Now shul ye vnderstonde that
there be thre accions. The first is
that a man be baptised after that he
hath synneth. Saynt Augustyn
sayth but he be penyent for hys ol-
de synful lyf. He may not begynne
the newe cleue lyf. For yf he be
baptised wythout penyence for his
olde gylte. He receybeth the marke
of baptesme. But not the grace ne
the remyssion of his synnes tyl he ha-
ue Berry repentaunce.

Another
defaute is that men done dedely syn-
ne after they haue receyued bap-
tesme. The thirde defaute is that men
falle in venyal synnes after her bap-
tesme fro day to day. Therof sayth
saynt Augustyn that penaunce of
good and hūble folke is the penyten-
ce of euery day. The spyces of penaū-
ce ben thre. That one of them is so-
lempne. Another is comen and the
thirde is pryue. That penaūce þ is
solepne is in two maners. as is to
be put out of holy chyrche in lenton
for slaughter of children and suche
maner thynges. Another is whan a
man hath synned openly. of whiche
sinne the fame is openly knowen in
the contree and thenne holy chyrche
by Jugement distreyneth hym for to

The Persons tale

do open penance. Somme penance
 is that prestes enioyne men comē
 ly in certayn caas as for to god per
 auenture naked on pylgrymage or
 barefoot. Preuy penance is that uen
 doon al day for preuy synne of whi
 che we shryuen vs preuely and recey
 uen pryuy penance. Now shal
 thou vnderstonde what behoueth &
 is necessarye to euery preuy penytēt
 And these stonde in thre. Contricion
 of herte. Confession of mouth. And
 satisfaction for whiche Johan Luz
 soston sayth. Penitence distreth
 to accepte benyngly euery peyne þ is
 hym enioyned wpyth contricion of
 herte and shryfte of mouth wpyth sa
 tisfaction and worshipng of alle ma
 ner humylyte. And this is fruytfull
 penance ayenst tho thynges in whi
 che we wrathen our Lord Ihu cryst
 This is to saue delyte in thynkyng.
 By rechelesnes in spekyng. by wpy
 ked and synful worshipng. Ayenst
 these wpyked gyltes is penance.
 That may be lykened to a tree. The
 rote of this tre is contricion that hy
 deth hym in the herte of hym that is
 beray repentante ryght as the rote
 of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of
 the rote of contricion spryngeth a
 stalkke that bereth branuchys & leuis
 of confession. And
 the flesshe. Of whiche cryste sayth
 in the gospel. Do ye dygne fruyt off
 penitence. For by thys fruyt men
 may knowe this tree and not by the
 rote that is hyd in the herte of a man
 Net by the branchys ne leuis of co

fession. And therefore our lorde Ihu
 Luste sayth thus. By the fruyt of
 them ye shal knowe them. Of thys
 rote spryngeth a seed of grace which
 seed is moder of sykernes. And this
 seed is eger & hote. the grace of thys
 seed spryngeth of god through the re
 menbraunce of the day of dome & of
 the peynes of helle. of this mater.

Salamon sayth that in the drede of
 god a man forlettith his synne. The
 hete of this seed is the loue of god &
 despyrnyng of the Joye perdurable.

This hete draweth the herte of man
 to god and doth hym hate his synne
 for there is nothyng that sauoureth
 so sote to a chyld as the mylke of
 his noryce. Ne no thyng is to hym
 more abhomynable than that myl
 ke whan it is medlyd wpyth other
 mylke. Ryght so the synful man þ
 loueth his synne. hit semeth it is to
 hym most swete of ony thyng. But
 for þ tyme that he loueth sadly our
 lord Ihesu Cryst and despreth the
 lyp pardurable. There is to hym no
 thyng more abhomynabyll. For soth
 the loue of god is the lawe of god.

For whiche dauid the pphete sayth
 I haue loued thy lawe & hated wpy
 kednes. he þ loueth god kepeth hys
 lawe and his worde. This the pphete
 danyel enspred vpon the byspon
 of Nabogodonosor whan he coun
 ceyled hym to do penance. Penan
 ce is of the tree of lyp to them that it
 receyuen. & he that holdeth hym ver
 ry penytēt is blesyd after the sentence

of salamon In this penytence or contricion man shal vnderstonde four thynges. that is to saye what is contricion. And whiche ben the causes þe meuen a man to contricion. And how he shold be contrite. And what contricion auayleth to the soule.

Than it is thus that contricion is the Berry sorow that a man restreyneth in his herte for his synnes wyth sad purpose to shryue hym and to do penance and neuer more to do synne And this sorowe shal be in this maner as sayth saint Bernard. It shal be greuous and heuy & wel sharpe and poynaunt in herte. fyrst for a man hath agylted his lorde and hys creatour. And more sharpe and poynaunt for he hath agylted his fader celestyal And yet more sharp and poynaunt for he hath wrachyd hym and agylte hym that bought hym þe wyth his precyous blood hath deluyeryd hym fro the bondes of synne and fro the crueltie of the deuyl and fro the peynes of helle These causes that meue a man to contricion been vi. fyrst a man shal remembre hym of his synnes but loke that remembraunce be to hym no delpte by no weye but shame and sorowe for his gylte for Job sayth synful men don werkes worthy of confusion. & therfor saith Ezechyel. I wyll Remembre me al the peres of my lyp in bytternes of my herte. And god sayth in the appocalips. Remembre yow fro whens that ye besafle For before the

tyme that ye spinned ye were the children of god and lymmys of the regne of god. But for your synne ye be wayen thral and ful menbris of the frnde. Hate of aungels. sklaundre of holy chirche. And fode of the fals serpent. perpetuel matier of the fyre of helle And that more foule and abominable for ye trespace as oft tyme as doth the hound that tourned agayn to ete his owen spyrng.

And yet fouler for your long contynyng in synne and your synful dysage. For whiche ye be roten in your synnes as a beest in his dung. Suche maner thoughtys maketh a man a shamed for his synnes and no delpte as sayth the prophete Ezechyel. ye shul remembre you of your wepes. and they shal dysplese you Sothely synnes ben the wayes that lede folk to helle. The second cause that ought to make a man haue desdayn of synne is this as sayth Peter. who so doth synne is thral to synne. And synne puueth a man in grete thraldom And thefor sayth the prophete ezechyel I wente sorowful and had dysdayn of my self Certes wel ought a man haue dysdayn of synne and wyth drawe hym fro that thraldom and dysloupe. For lo what sayth senekke in this mater he sayth thus.

Though I wyft that neyther god ne man shol neuer knowe it. yet wolde I haue desdayne for to doo synne: And the same Senekke sayth I am born to gretter thynges than to bee

The Persons tale

tralle to my body. more thral may
uoman ne woman make of his bo
dy than yeue his body to synne. and
were it the fowlest chorle or the fow
lest woman that lyueth and lest off
valew. yet he is charged and moost
foul & most in seruytude euer fro the
hyer degre that a man falleth. To
more is he thral & more to god & to
the world vile & abhomyable. Do
good god wel ought a man haue dis
deygne of synne syth that thourgh h
there as he was fre now is he made
bonde And therfore sayth saynt Aus
tyn. yf thou hast disdaygne of thy ser
uaunt. yf he agylie or synne haue
thou thenne no disdaygne that thou
thy self sholdest do synne. Take re
warde of thyn owen valewe h thou
ne be to foul to thy self ne to thyn.

Alas we oughten they that haue dis
dayn to be seruautes & thral to synne
Soze to be ashamed of him self: that
god of his endles goodnes hath sette
in hygh astate or yeue hym strenthe
of body. beaute. prosperpte & bought
hym fro the deth wyth his heite blod
that they so vnkynedly agaynst hys
gentylnes quytten them so vyleyusly
to slaughter of her owen so wyls. O
good god ye wynnemen that ben of
grete beaute remembre yow on the
prouerbe of Salamon he sayth he
lykeneth a fair womā that is a fool
of her body to a rynge of golde that
is worn in the groyn of a sowe. For
ryght as a sowe wrottyth in euery or
dure. so wroteth she her beaute in stin
kyng ordure of synne. The thirde

cause that ought to meue a man to
contricion is drede of the day of do
me And the horryble peynes of helie
for as saith saynt Jerome. At euery
tyme h I remembre of the day of da
me I quake for whā I ete or drynke
or do w^{at} so I do. euer me semeth
the trompe sowndeth in myn eres.

Ryseth vp h ben dede and come ye to
the Jugement. O good god moche
ought a man to drede suche a Juge
ment there as we shal be al. As saith
saynt Poule. Before the strapt Ju
gement of our Lord Ihesu Cryste.
where as we shal make a general cō
gregaciō wher as no mā may be ab
sente. for certes there auaylth none
essoyne ne non excusaciō & not only
that our fautes shal be Jued bnt
eke our werkes shal openly be kno
wen. And h as sayth saint Bernard
There ne shal no pletyng auayle ne
no slepyght. we shal yeue rekenyng
of euery ydle worde. Ther shal we
haue a Juge that may not be decey
uyd ne corrupt. and why for certis al
our thoughtes be disrouerd as to
hym. ne for prayer ne for mede. he
wyl not be corrupt And also he saith
The wrath of god wyl not spare no
wyght for prayer ne for yest. And
therfore atte day of dome there is no
ne hope. wherfore as saith saynt An
celme. ful grete anguysshe shal the
synful folke haue at that tyme whe
re shal be the sterne & wroth Juge sit
tyng aboue & vnder hym the horry
ble pyt of helle open to dystroye hym
that wold not be knowē his synnes

The Persons Tale

Whiche synnes shullen openly be shewyd before god & every creature. And on the left syde mo deuyllis that the herte may thynke for to harrye & drawe the synful sowles to the pytte of helle. And wythin the hertes of folke shal be the betyng conscience. & wythout forth shal his werke accuse hym. Thence shal the wretchyd soule fle to hyde hym. But certes he may not hyde hym he must come forth & shew hym for certes as saith saynt iherome. the erthe shal cast him out of hym and the see also and the ayer also that shal be ful of thunder clappis & lychtynng. Now sothly who so wyl remembre hym of thys thynge I gesse that his synnes shal not tourne hym to despyte but to grete sorowe fro drede of the peyn of helle. And therfore sayth Job to god. Suffre lord þ I may a while bewaile & bewepe or I go retornyng to the derke erthe & coueryd wyth derkenes the lond of myserye and of derkenes where as is shadow of deth where as there is none othre ordeynance but grypsly drede that euer shal laste. Lo here may ye see that Job prayd respyte a while to bewepe and wayle his trespaas. for sothly one day to respyte is better than alle the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may acquyte hym self by fore god by penytence in thys worlde and not by tresour. Therfore sholde he praye to god to geue hym respyte a while to bewepyn and bewayple his trespaas. for certes all

the sorowe that a man myght maie fro the begynnyng of the world nys but a lycht thynge at the regarde of of the sorow of helle. The cause why that Job clepeth the lond of derkenes vnderstondyth that he clepyth it lond or erth for it is stable & neuer shal fayle derkenes. for he that is in helle hath defaute of lycht naturel. for certes the derke lycht that shal come out of the fyre that euer shal brenne shal tome hem al to peyne þ be in helle. for it sheweth hym al the horryble deuylls that them torment couerd wyth the derkenes of deth þ ben the synnes þ the wretchyd man hath doon. whiche that destourben hym to see the face of god. Ryght as a derke cloude betwene vs and the sonne. Lond of myserye by cause þ there be thre defautes apenste thre thynge that folke of this world haue in this present lyf that is to saye honouris. despytes. & ryches. Apenste honour haue they in hell shame and confucion. for wel ye wote they clepen honour the reuerence that men don to men. But in helle is non honour ne reuerence for certes no more reuerence shal be there to a kynge than a knaue. for whiche god saith by the prophete iheremye. The folke that me dyspysen shal be in despyte. Honour is eke clepyd a grete lordshipp ther shal no wyght serue other but of harme & turmete. Honour is eke clepyd grete dygnyte & hyghnes. but in helle shal they alle be fortrode wyth deuylls as god sayth. The

The Persons tale

horryble deuylls shullen go and comyn vpon the hedys of dampnyd folkie And this is for as moche that the hper that they were in present lyf the more they shul be abated & defowled in helle. ayenst the riches of this world shal they haue mysese of pouerte. And this pouerte shal be in fore thynges in defaute of tresour off whiche Dauid sayth. The riche folke embracen & couete in al her herte the riches of this world shul slepe in the sleppng of deth. as no thing shul they fynde in there hondes of al her tresour And more ouer the mysese of helle shal be in defaute of mete and drynke for god sayth thus by moyses. shal be wasted wyth honger. And the byrdes of helle shal deuoure hem wyth bytter deth. And the galle of the dragon her morcellys. And ferther ouer her mysese shal be in defaute of clothyng for they shal be naked in body as of clothyng. Saue the fyre in which they bienne & other fylthes And naked shal they be in so wle of a maner vertues. whiche that is the clothyng of soule. where ben thenne the gay robys & the softe shertis and fyn shertis. Lo what saith god of them by the pphete ysaye. In vnder them shal be strawed mothes & her couertouts shal be of wormes of helle: And fortherouer her mysese shal be in defaute of frendes for he is not poure that hath good frendys. but there is no frende. for neyther god ne good creature shal be frende

to them. And euery of hem shal hate other wyth dedely hate. The sones & the daughters shal rebelle ayenst the fader and moder. And kynrede ayenst kynrede and chyden and despyssen eche other both day and nyght as god sayth by the prophete mycheas. And the louyng chyldren in some tyme loueden so flesshly eueryche of them wold ete other yf he myght. For how shold they loue to gyder in the pepnes of helle. whan they hated eche other in the prosperite of this lyf For truste wel her flesshly loue is dedely hate as sayth the prophete Dauid who so louyth wyckednes he hateth his owen soule. And who so hateth his owen soule. Certes he may loue none other wyght in noo manere And therfore in helle is noo frendshyp but euer the more cursing the more chydyng and the more dedely hate is among them. And further ouer they shal haue defautes of alle maner delytes. for why. For delytes ben appetytes of the wittes as syght heeryng. smellng. sauourng. and touchng. but in helle her syghte shal be ful of derknes. of smoke and ful of teris. And her heeryng ful of weymentyng and of gruntng of teth as sayth Ihu cryste her nostrylles shal be ful of synkyng. And as sayth ysaye the pphete. Her sauourng shalle be fulel of bytter galle. And as touchng her body hit shal be couerpd wyth fyre that neuer shal be quenched And wyth woundes

The Persons Take

that neuer shal deye as god sayth by the mouth of ysaye. a for as moche as they shal not wene þ they mo we dye for peyn a by deth fle for peyn þ may they vnderstonde in the worde of Job that sayth that there is shadowe hath a lyknes of the thing of which it is shadowed. right so fareth the peyne of helle. it is lyke dethe for the anguyssh horrible. a why. for it peyneth them euer as though men shold dye anon. But certes they shal not deye. for saynt gregore sayth. to captys shal be dethe wythout deth a ende wythout ende a defaute wythout sayning for her deth shal alway spue. And her ende shal euer more be gonne. a her defaute shal neuer fayle And therfore sayth saynt Johan the Euangeliste. They shall folow deth and they shal not fynde hym and to desyre to deye a deth shal fle fro them And eke Job sayth that in helle is non ordie of rewele. And al be it so þ god hath created al in right ordie. a nothyng wythout ordie But al thurges be ordeyned and nomgred. yet ne uertheles they þ be dampned be noo thyng in ordie ne holde non ordie.

for the erthe shal bere them no fruyt. for as the prophete Dauyd sayth. God shal destroye the fruyt of the erthe from them Ne water shalle yeue hem no moysture ne the eyer no refresshyng. ne the fyre no lyght. for as sayth saynt Basyle. The Brennyng of the fyre of this worlde shal god yeue to hem that ben damp

ned in helle. But the lyght a the clere nes shal be yeuen in heuen to his chil dren lyght as the good man yeueth brede to his chyl dren a bones to hys houndes. And so they shal haue non hope to escape. And therfore speket Job. Atte last there shal honour and grilly drede dwellen wythouten ende honour is alway drede of harme that is to come. And this drede shall euer dwelle in the hertes of them that ben dampned And therfor haue they lost al her hope for vi. causes. first for god þ is her Juge shal be wythouten mercy to them. ne they may not plesse hym ne non of his halowes ne may peye no thyng for theyr rans on ne they haue no boys to speke to hym. ne they may not fle fro peyne. And thefore sayth salamon. the wyc ked man depereth. a whā he is dede he shal haue none hope to escape from peyne. who so wold wel vnderstonde these peynes and bethynke hym wel that he hath deseruyd the peynes for his synnes. Certes he shold haue more talent to syghe and wepe than for to synge and for to pleye. for as sayth Salamon. who that hath science for to knowe peynes that been establyshyd and ordeyned for synne he wold forsake synne. That science sayth saynt Austyn makyth a may to weymenten in his herte. The fourth poynt that a man ought to make contricion fore. is the sorowful remembraunce of the good that he hath lest to doo here in erthe and

eke the good that he hath loyn. Sothly the good werkys that he hath lest ether they be the good werkis that he wrought er he fyl in to dedely synne or ellys the good werkys þ he wrought whyle he laye in dedely synne.

Sothely the good that he dyd beforne that he fyl in dedely synne ben all mortefped astoned & dilled by the est synnyng The other werkis that he wrought whyle he laye in synne ben vitterly dede as to the lyf perdurable in heuen. Than thylke good werkys that ben mortefped by est synnyng whiche good werkis he did whyles he was in charyte mo we neuer quycken ayen wythout berey re freynt and wythdrawyng the strenges of manys corage and the meuynges in his herte in suche manere as they ne skyppe out by anger ne by yre. And therof sayth god by the mouth of ezechyel. That yf the right ful man retorne agayn from his right wysnes and to wyrche wyckednes shal he lyeu nay. For al the good werkys that he hath wrought shulle neuer be in remembraunce.

For he shal dreye in his synne. And vpon that chapitre sayth saynt Gregory thus that we shul vnderstonde pryncipally that whan we doo dedely synne it is nought. Nether for to drawe in to memoire the good werkys that we haue wrought byforn for certis in the werkynge of dedely synne there is no truste to good werke that we haue doon befor. That

is to saye as to haue therby the lyf perdurable in heuen. But sothely the good werkys that men don whyles they ben i dedely synne for as mykyl as they were don in dedely synne theye may neuer quycken for certes thinges þ neuer hade lyf may neuer quycken. And neuertheless al be it þ they auayle not to haue the lyf perdurable. yet auaylen they to a brydsege of the peyn of helle Or ellys to gete temporel riches. or ellys that god wyl rather enlumpne and lygsten the herte of the synfull man to haue repentaunce. And eke they auayle to a man to doo good werkys that the fende haue the lasse power of his soule And thus the curteys lord Ihesu Cryste wyl that no good werke bee losse. For in somewhat it shal awayle. But for as moche that the good werkis that men don whyles they ben in good lyf ben al mortefped by synne folowynge. And eke sythe al the good werkis that men doon whyles they be in dedely synne ben vitterly dede as for to haue the lyf pardurable. wel may that man that no good werky doth spng that flessh newe songe. Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.

For certes it bereueth a man goodnes and nature and eke the goodnes of grace. for soth the grace of the holy goost fareth as fyre that may not be yde. for spre sayleth anon as it leseth his worchyng. Than leseth the synful man the goodnes of gloupe that only is behoten to good

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men that labourer & werken. wel may he be fory themne that oweth al his lyf to god as long as he lyueth. And eke as longe as he shal lyue. þ no goodnes hath to paye wyth his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lyf. For trust wel he shal peue acou- tps. as sayth saynt Bernard. Of all the goodes that haue be peuen hym in this present lyf. And how he hath despended them not so moche þ there shal perysse an hert of his heed ne a moment of an houre that he ne shal peue therof a rekenyng. The fyfte thyng is that ought to meue a man to contricion is remembraunce of the passyon that our lord Ihu cryst suf- fryd for our synnes. For as sayth saynt Bernard. whyles that I lyue I shal haue remembraunce of the tra- uelyps that our lord Ihu cryst suf- fryd in prechynge. his werynes in tra- ueleng. his temptacions whan he fasted. his long wakinges whan he prayd. his teris whan he wepte for pyte of good peple. the woo and the shame and the fylthe that men say- den to hym. of the foule spyttyng þ men spytten in his face. of the buffet tps þ men gaf hym of the foule mou- this and of the foule repreuys þ men to hym sayden. of the nayles wyth the whiche he was nayled to the cros- se And of alle the remenaunt of his passion that he suffryd for mannys synne and nothyng for his gylte. And ye shal vnderstonde that euery maner ordre of ordeynaunce is torned þp so down. for it is soth that god &

reson and sensualyte and the body of a man ben so ordeyned. that eu- ryche of thysse four thynges shuld ha- ue lordship ouer þ other as thus god shold haue lordship ouer resō. & resō ouer sensualyte ouer the body of mā but sothly in man semeth al this or- der of ordenaunce is turned þp soo- down. And therfore themne for as my- kyl as the reson of man wyl not be subget ne obeysaunt to god that is lord by ryght. Therfore leseth it the lordshyp that it sholde haue in sensu- alyte and eke ouer the body of man. And why for sensualyte rebelleth the- ne ayenst reson. And by that wey le- syth reson his lordshyp ouer sensua- lyte and ouer the body.

For ryght as reson is rebel to god Ryght so is sensualyte rebell to reson and the body also.

And vertes thys ordenaunce. And thys rebellyon Dure Lorde Ihesu Cryst aboughte vpon his body well- dect. And herkeneth in whiche wyse

For as mykyl themne as reson is rebell to god therfore is man wor- thy to haue sorowe and to be dede.

This suffryd Our Lord Ihesu for man after he was betrayed of hys discyppe and distrened and boun- de so that the bloode brast out at eu- ry nayle of hys hondes. As sayth saynt Augustyn. & ferthermore for as mykyl as reson of man wyl not daunte sensualyte whan it may.

Therfore is man worthy to haue shame And this suffred oure Lorde Ihu cryst for man whan they spytte

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in his vjsage. And ferther ouer theſe
ne for as moche as the captif body
of man is rebel both to reſon and to
ſeſualite therfor it is worthy the deſth
And this ſuſtred our Lord Ihu criſt
for mā vpon the croſſe. whet as ther
was no parte of his body fre wyth
out grete peyn & bytter paſſion. And
al this ſuſtred Iheſu criſt that neuer
forgeteth. To moche am I peyned
for tho thynges that I neuer deſer
uyd and to my kyl defouled for freu
ſhyy that man is worthy to haue.
And therfore may the ſynfull man
wel ſaye as ſaint Bernard ſayth.
A corſyd be the bytternes. For certes
after dyuerſe dyſcordauntes of oure
wyckednes was the paſſion of Ihu
Cryſt y ordeyned in dyuerſe thyn
ges as thus Certes ſynful mannyſ
ſoule betrayed the deuyl by couetyſe
of temporel proſperyte and ſcomes
by diſcept whan he cheſith fleſſhly de
lytes. & is tormented by Impaciencie
of aduerſyte & beſpet by ſeruage in
ſubiectiō of ſynne. & atte laſt he is
ſlayn ſynally for this diſcordaun
ce of ſynful man. was Iheſu Cryſt
firſt betrayed. And after þ was he
bound that cam for to vnbrynde vs
of ſynne & of the peyne. Thēne was
he beſcourged þ only ſhold be honou
ryd in al thynges & of alle thynges.
Thenne was his vjsage beſpytte þ
ought to be deſpyred for to be ſeyn of
al mankynde. In whiche vjsage
aungels deſyren to loke. and therein
was vilenſly beſpette Thēne was

he ſcomed þ no thyng had gylt. And
ſynally thenne was he cruſceped
and ſleyn. Thenne were accompliſhed
the wordes of ysaye that ſayth. He
was wounded for oure myſdedes &
defouled for our vylonyes. Now
ſyth þ Ihu Cryſt toke on hym ſelf
the peyne of al our wyckednes. my
kyl ought ſynful man to wepe & to
bewaylle that for his ſynnes goddis
ſone of heuen ſhold al this peyne en
dure. The vi. thyng that ought
to meue a man to contryciō is the
hope of thre thynges that is to ſaye
forpeuenes of ſynne. and the peſte of
grace wel for to doo. And the ioye of
heuen wyth the whiche god ſhal gu
erdon man for his good dedes. And
for as moche as Iheſu Cryſt yeueth
vs the peſtus of his grace and of his
ſouerayn bounte. Therfore is he cle
pyd Iheſus nazarenus rex Judeoz
Iheſus is for to ſay ſauyor or ſalua
cion on whom men ſhal hope to ha
ue forpeuenes of ſynnys. which that
is pperly ſaluacion of ſynnes. And
therfore ſaid the aungel to Joſeph.
Thou ſhalt clepe his name Iheſus þ
ſhal ſaue his peple of her ſynnes. &
herof ſaith ſeynt Peter. Ther is none
other name vnder heuē þ is yeuen to
ony man by whiche a man may be
ſauyd but only Iheſus. nazarenus
is as moche to ſaye as for flouriſſing
in whiche a man ſhal hope that he þ
yeueth hym remyſſyd of ſynnys ſhal
alſo yeue hym grace wel for to doo.
for in the flour is hope of fruyt

in tyme comyng. And in foryeuenes of synne hope of grace wel to doo. I was at dore of thyn herte said ihesus & cleped for to entre. he that openeth to me shal haue foryeuenes of synnes I wyl entre in to him by my grace. and suppe wyth hym by the good werkes that he shal do whiche werkes ben the fode of god. And he shal soupe wyth me by the grete iope that shal be yeuen to hym. Thus shal man hope that for his werkes of penaunce god shal yeue hym hys regne as he behoteth hym in the gospel. Now shal man vnderstonde in what maner shal be his contricion I say hit shal be vniuersal & total. This to saye a man shal be veray repentaunt for alle his synnes that he hath don in delpte of his thought. For delpte is perplous. for ther be two maners of consentynge that one of them is cleped consentynge of affliction. Whā a man is meued to do synne apenst the lawe of god. Al though his reson consente not to do synne in dede. yet seyn som doctours and men that suche delpte that dwelyth longe is full perplous. al be it neuer so lyte. And also a man shold sorow namely for al he euer he hath despred apenst the lawe of god wyth parfyt consynnyng to the dede wherfore I say that many men repente hem neuer of suche thoughtes and delptes and neuer shryue hem of it but onky of the dede of grete synnes outward. wherfor I saye that suche wycked delptes and

wicked thoughtes ben subtyl begylars of them that shal be damned. More ouer man ought to sorow for his wycked wordes and for his wycked dedes. for certes repentaunce of a spynuler synne and not repentyng of alle his other synnes. or ellys repentyng hym of alle his other synnes & not of a spynuler synne may not anaplle. For certes god almyghty is al good. And therfore he foryeueth al or ellys right nought. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. I wote certeynly that god is enemye to euery synnar. And how than he obserueth one synne. Shal he haue foryeuenes of the remenaūt of his other synnes. nay. & fetherouer contricion shold be wonder sorowful and anguysshous. & therfore yeueth him god pleyntly his mercy. & therfor whā my soule was anguysshous wythin me I had remembraunce of God & my prayer myght come. to hym. Forther ouer contricion must be cōtynuel & men haue stedfast purpose to shryue hem & for to amende hem of her lyff. Forsothly whyle contricion lasteth man may haue hope of foryeuenes. And of this cometh hate of synne & destropet synne both in hym self & eke in other folke at his power. for whiche Dauid saith. ye that louen god. hate wyckednes. for trusted wel to loue god is for to loue that he loueth and hate that he hateth.

The last thyng that a man shal vnderstonde in contricion is thys.

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Wherof auayleth contricion. I saye
sonityme that contricion deliuereth
a man fro synne. Of whiche dauid
sayth I say quod dauid. A purpose
fermly to shryue me and thou lorde
hast relpyd my synne. And ryght so
as contricion auayleth not wythout
sayd purpose of shryfte and satisfac
cion. ryght soo confessyon ne satis
faction auayle not wythout contry
cion. For moche contricion destro
yeth the pryson of helle And makith
weck and feble the strenth of the de
uyl. And restroeth the yeste of the
holy ghoost and of alle vertues and
Interdensyth the soule of synne and
deliuereth the soule fro payne of hell
and fro the company of the deuyl.
And fro seruage of synne. And resto
ryth to alle goodnes spiritual in to
the companie and comunyon of
holy chyrche. And ferther ouer hit
makyth hym that whylome sone of
yre. to be the sone of grace. And alle
these thynges he putteth to holy wit
And therfore he that wyl sette his en
tente to thysse thynges he were ful wi
se. For thenne he shold not in al his
lyf haue corage to synne But thenne
his body and alle hys herte. he shold
confourme to the serupse of Ihu cuf
te. And therfore do hym homage for
certes our swete Lord Ihesu Cryste
hath sparyd vs so benyngly in oure
folpes that ys he ne had pite on man
nys soule. A sory songe myght we
alle syng.

Explicit prima pars penitencie.

Inapit secunda pars.

The second parte of penytē
ce is confessyon and that
is syngne of contricion.

Now shal ye vnderstonde what is
confessyon. and whether it ought ne
des to be or none. and whiche thyng
ges ben couenable to berry confess
on. fyrst shalt thou vnderstonde þ
confessyon is berry shewyng of syn
ne to the preeft. this is to saye berry.
For he must confesse hym of alle the
condicions that be longynge to hys
synne as ferforth as he can. al must
be sayd and nothyng excused ne hid
ne forwrappid and not auante him
of hys good werkys. And ferthero
uer it is necessarpe to vnderstonde
whens that synnes spryngen.

And how they encrecen. and ther ben
spryngyng of synnes as sayth saint
Poule in this wyse. That right as
by a mā synne entryd first in to this
world. And throug that synne deyde
Ryght so deeth entryd in to alle men
that synned. And this man was
adam by whom þ synne entrid in to
this world whan he brake the com
maundement of god. ⁊ therfor he that
first was so myghty þ he sholde not
deyed. becam suche one that he must
nedes deye whether he wold or noo ⁊
al his pgenpe þ is in this world that
in þ maner synne deyen. loke þ in the
state of inorece whā adā ⁊ eue were
naked in paradise ⁊ no sham had of
her nakednes. how þ þ serpēt þ was
most wply of al other bestys þ god
had made said to the womā qnaded
god to you ye shold not ete of euery

tre in paradysse. The woman answered of the fruyt sayd she of the trees in paradysse we feden vs. But sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddel of paradysse. God forbod vs for to eten ne to touche it lest perauenture we shal dye. The serpent sayde to the woman: nay. nay. ye shal not dye of deeth: for soth god wote that what day that ye ete thereof your eyen shalle open and ye shal be as goddes knowynge good and harm. The woman sawe that the tree was good to fedynge and sayre to the eye and delectable to the spgght. She took of the fruyt of the tre and ete of it. And gaf of it to her husbonde. And he ete. And anon the eyen of them both openyd. And whan they knewe that they were naked. They sowyd of a fyg tree leuys in maner of brechis to hyden her membrys.

Here may ye see that dedely synne hath first subiection of the fende. As shewyth here by the adder. And after ward the delpte of the flessch as shewyth here by Eue. And after by consentynge of reson as shewyth by Adam. For trust wel though so were the fende one ctemptyd that is to saye the flessch And fruyt of satysfaction had delpte in beaute of the fruyt defendyd. yet certes tyl that reson that is to saye. Adam consentyd to the etynge of the fruyt. He stode hygh in the state of Innocence. Of that Adam to be we that synne orygynal. for of hym flesschly descended. Ben we al and engendryd of vile &

corrupt mater. and whan the soule is put in our body right anon is contracted orygynal synne. & þ was only peyne of concupyscence. whiche is after ward both peyne and synne. And therefore be we al born sonnes of wrath and of dampnatyon perdurable yf ne were baptesme that we recyue whiche benymeth vs the culpe. But forsoth the peynes dwelle wyth vs as the temptacion. whiche peyn hygh concupyscence. And this concupyscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man. Hit maketh hym coueyte couetyse of flessch and flesschly synne by spgght of his eyen as to the earthely thynges.

And eke couetyse of hyghnes by pryde of herte. Now as for to speke of the first couetyse that is concupyscence after the lawe of our membrys þ were lausfully made and by rygghful Jugement of god. I saye for as moche as a man is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord. Therefore is his herte to hym dysobeyssaunt. thurgh concupyscence. Hit is Impossyble but he be tempted som tyme and noyed in his flessch to synne. And this thyng may not sayle as longe as he lyueth. Hit may wel weye feble and sayle by vertu of baptesme.

And by the grace of god thurgh penytence. But fully shal it neuer quenche. That he ne shal somtyme be meuyd in hym self but yf he were all restreyned by lyknes or by malysce of forserpe

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or colde drynkes. For what sayth
saynt Paule. The flesshe coueteth a-
penst the spirite. ⁊ the spirite openst
the flesshe they ben so contrarpe. And
so stryuen that man may not doo al
leway as he wolde. The same saynt
Poule after his grete penaunce in
water and in sonde by nyght and by
day by grete payrpl and in grete pain
in sonde in grete famyn and thrist in
colde and ones stoned almost to deeth

yet sayd he alas I catyf man.
who shal delpyuer me fro the pryson
of my catyf body. And saynt The-
rome sayd. whan he long tyme hade
dwellyd in desert wher as he had no
cōpani but bestes wher as he had no
mete but herbis ⁊ water to his drink
ne no bed but the naked erthe. For
whiche his flesshe was black as an
ethyope for hete ⁊ destroyed for colde
yet sayd he the brennyng of lecherye
boyled in alle his body. wherfor I
wote wel spykerty that they be decey-
ued that saye that they be not temp-
ted in her sede spryngyng. As well
may a choul be sauyd as the lord the
same dethe þ the choule takyth the
lorde takyth.

wherfore I re-
de doo ryght so by thy choule.
As thou woldest they lord dyd wyth
the yf thou were in his plyght.

Euery synful man is choule to syn-
ne I rede she certes thou lord þ thou
rewele the in suche wyse that the chor-
les rather loue the thenne hate the.

I wote wel there is degre aboue de-
gre as reson is and skylle is þ men
doo her deuoyet there as it due. But

certes extorions ⁊ despyte of poure
vnderlynges is dampnable. And
furthemor vnderstonde well that
cōquetours or tirantis maken wel
ofte thrallys of them that ben borne
of as ryall blood as they that them
conquetyr.

This name of
thraldom was neuer known eerst
tyl that Noe sayd. his sone canaan
shold be thral to his brethern for his
synne. what saye we thenne of them
that pylle and do extorions to holy
chirche.

Certes the swerde that
men yeuen first to a knyght whan
he is newe dubbdy signefyeth that he
shold defende holy chyrche and not
robb: them.

And who
soo doth is a traytour to Cryste as
sayth Saynt Austyn. Tho ben
the deuellys wolups that strangelyr
the sheep of Ihesu Cryste and doon
worse than wolups:

For soth whan the wolf hath ful his
wombe he stenteth to strangle sheep.

But sothly the pylloours and dis-
troyers of goodes of holy chyrche
do not so. For thye stynte neuer
to pylle. Now haue I said syn
soo is that synne was fyrst cause of
thraldom and subiection.

But certes syth the tyme of grace
cam. God ordeyned that som folke
shold be made more in hygh degre.
⁊ som falke more lowe estate and hy-
gher. And that eueriche shold be
seruyd in hysestate and his degre.
And therfor in som contres there as
they ben thrallys. when they haue
torned hem to the feith they make her

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thrallys fre out of thraldom. And therfor certes the lord owyth to hys man. that the man oweth to the lord. The pope clep yth hym self seruaunt of seruauntes of god. But for as moche as the state of holy chyrche myght not be kept in reste ne in pees in erthe. But yf god had ordeyned h̄ som men haue hyper degre. And som men lower. Therfore was soueraynte ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiectes in reson as fer south as it lyeth in her power. And not to destroye hem ne confounde. wherfor I saye thylk lordes ben woluyss that deuouren the possessyons or the catel of other folke wrongfully wythout mercy or mesure. They shul be releyd by the same mesure that they haue mesured to poure folk for the mercy of Ihesu Cryste but they it amende. Now shul ye vnderstonde in what maner synne wepeth and encrepeth in man. The first thyng is h̄ norysshing of syn of which I spak byfore that is concuppence. And after that cometh subiestyon of the deuyl that is to saye the deuyllys belowe. wyth which he bloweth in mā the fyre of concuppence. And after that a man be thynkelh hym whether he wold doo or no that thyng to whiche he is tempted And than yf that a man wythstonde and weyue the first tpsyng of his flesshe and of the fende. than it is no synne. And yf so be he do not than feleth he anon

a flame of delyte. And than it is good to bewaar ⁊ to kepe hym well or ellys he wyl falle anon in to consentyng of synne. And than wyl he do it yf he may haue tyme ⁊ space: And of this mater sayth Moyses by the deuyl in this maner. The fende sayth I wyl chache and pursiwe the mā by wyckyd subgestyon. and I wyl honte hym by meuyng or steryng of synne. And I wyl departe my pryse or my pray by delyberaciō And my lyst shal be accomplysshed in delyte. I wyl drawe my swerde in consentyng. for certes right as a swerde departeth one in two pecys. Right so consentyng departeth god from man. And thenne wyl I flee hym wyth my honde in deth off synne. Thus sayth the fende. for certes thenne is a man al dede in soule. And thus is synne complysshed by temptacion. by delyte and by consentyng. And thenne synne is cleped a meruaylle. for soth synne is in two maners. either it is venyal or dedly synne. Sothly whan a man loueth ony creature more than Ihesu Cryste our creatour thenne it is dedly synne. And venyal synne yf a man loue Ihesu cryst lesse than hym ought. for sothe the dede of this venyal synne is ful perylous for it amenusith the loue that men shold haue to good more. And therfor yf a man charge more hym self wyth many suche venyal synnes. certis but if so be that he discharge of them by shrift.

they may well lyghlylly amenuse in hym al the loue that he hath to Ihesu cryste. And in this wyse skyppeyth Venyal synne in to the dedely synne for certes the more that a man chargeth his soule wyth Venyal synnes the more is he inclyned to dedely synne. & therfore leet vs not be nedigent in dischargyng vs of Venyal synne. For the prouerbe sayth many smale maketh a grete. And herkene this ensauple A grete wawe of the see cometh somtyme wyth a grete a dyolence that it drenchyth the shyp. And the same harme doo somtyme the smale dropes of water. That entreth thurgh a lpyl creuys in the thurrokk and in the botom of the shyp yf me be so neglygent þ they dyscharge hem not by tyme. And therfore al though there be difference betwene thysse two causes of drenchyng yet at gates the shyp is dreynt. ryght so farthe it somtyme of dedely synne & of anoyous Venyal synnes whā they muldeplye in man so gretely that the worldy thynges þ he loueth thurgh whiche he synneth Venyal is as grete in his herte as the loue of god or more. And therfore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset ne don pryncipally for goddes sake. Al though a man loueth lasse than god. yet is it Venyal synne. And dedely synne is whā the loue of ony thyng weyeth in the herte of man as moche as the loue of god or more. Dedely synne as sayth saynt Augustyn is whan a

man torneth his herte from god whiche that is berey souerayn bounte þ may not be chaunged. And yeueth his herte to a thyng that may chaunge and flytte. And certes that is euery thyng saue god of heuen. Forsoth yf that a man yeueth his loue whiche he oweth to god wyth al his herte vnto a creature certes so moche of loue as he yeueth to suche a creature. soo moche bereueth he fro god. And therfore doth he synne. for he that is dettour to god ne yeldeth not alle his dette to god that is to saye alle the loue of his herte. Now syth a man vnderstondeth generally whiche is Venyal synne Than is it couenable to telle speccially of synnes whiche that many a man perauenture demeth he in not synnyng and shryueth them not of the same synnes. And yet neuertheles they be synnes. And sothly as clerkes wyten this is to say þ euery tyme that a man eteth & dryncketh more than suffyeth to sustenance of his body certeyn he doth synne. Like whan he harkeneth not the compleynt of the poure men. Like whan he spekketh more than it nedeth it is synne Like whan he is in helthe of body & wyl not faste whan other men faste wythout cause reasonable. Like whan he slepeth more than nedeth. or whan he cometh by þ enchosyn to late to chirche or to other werkes of charyte. Like whan he vsith his wyf wythouten desyre souerayn of engendrure to thonour off

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god or for thentet to yelde his wyf the dette of his body. Like whan he wyl not vpyte the spyke or the prysoners whan he may. Like yf he loue wyff or childe or ony other worldly thyng more than resor requireth. Like yf he flaterer or blaundyse more than hym ought for ony necessyte. Like yf he a menuse or wythdrawe the almes of the poure. Like yf he apatayle hys mete more delyciously than nede is or ete it to hastily by sychorousnes. Like yf he talke banytes in the chirche or at goddes sermyse or that he be a talker of ydle wordes of foly or of vyloupe. For he shal yeue acountes of it at the day of dome. Like whan he behoteth or assureth to doo thynges that he may not perfoome. Like whan he lyghtnes of folpe misseyeth or scornyth his neyghbour. Like whan he hath ony wycked suspicion of thyngs there be woot of hit no sothfastnes. These thynges and moo wythouten nombre be synnes as sayth saynt Austyn. Now shal ye vnderstonde that al be it soo that none erthly man may eschewe al venyal synnes. yet may he refrene hym by the brennyng loue that he hath to our lord Ihesu cryste. And by prayers and confession and other goode werkes so that it shal but lityl greue. For as sayth saynt Augustyn yf a man loue god in suche maner that al that euer he doth is in the loue off god or for the loue of god. soke how mykyl that a drope of water that

fallyth in a furneyns ful of fyre annoyeth or greueth so mykyl annoyeth a venyal synne vnto a man that is persygth in the loue of Ihu crist

Men may also refrene venyalie synne by the receyving of the precious body of Ihesu Cryste. by receyvinge eke of holy water. by almes dede. by general confessyon of conspytor at masse and at pryme and complayne. And by blyssyng of bysshoppes and of presbies. And by other good werkes.

*De septem peccatis mortalibus.
Incipit de superbia.*

Now it is behouely thyng to tellyn whiche ben dedely synnes. that is to saye captif of synnes. Alle they renne in to colis but in dyuerse maner. Now be the cleped captifs for as moche as they be chye and spryngyng of alle other synnes. Of the rote of thys. vitysynys is pryde the general rote of al harmys for of this rote spryngyn certeyn braunches. as Ire. enuye. acidyde. or slouth. auarice. or couetyse to comyn vnderstondyng. glotonye and lecherye. And cuerche of thys synnes hath his braunches and hys twygges as shalle be declared in her chapytres folowyn. and though so be that man knowyth not vitytly the nombre of the twygges and off the harmys that comen of pryde. yet wyl I shewe a partye of them as ye

shal vnderstonde. ther is inobedience
 auaintyng. pprocryse despyte. arro
 gancye. Imprudence: smellynge of
 herte. Insolence. Elacyon. pertyna
 cye. Deph glozre. And other twyggis
 that I can not declare. Inobedy
 ent is he that dysobeyeth for despyte
 to the commaundement of god and
 to his souerayns & to his gostly fa
 der. Auaintour is he that auainteth
 hym of the harme or of the bounte þ
 he hath don. Apocryse is he that spy
 deth to shewe hym suche as he is.
 And shewed hym to the peple to seme
 suche as he is not. Dyspytous is he
 that hath disdaign of his neyghbour
 that is to saye of his euen crysten &
 hath dyspyte to doo that hym ought
 to do. Arrogant is he that thinketh
 that he hath that bounte in hym that
 he hath not. or weneth that he sholde
 haue it by his deserte. or ellys that he
 demeth that he be that he is not. Im
 prudent is he that for his pryde hath
 no shame for his synne. Swellyn
 ge of herte is whan a man reioyseth
 hym of harm that he hath don. Inso
 lent is he that dyspyteth in his Juge
 ment alle other folke as to the regar
 of his walewe and of his conynge &
 of his spekyng and of his berynge.
 Elate is he whan he may nether suf
 fre to haue mayster ne folowe. Im
 pacient is he that wyl not be taught
 ne vndernome of his byces and by
 shryft warrpeth apenst trowth wetyn
 gly and defendeth his foly. Contu
 may is he þ thugh his Indignaciõ
 is apenst euery auctoryte or power

of them that ben his souerayns Pres
 sumpcion is whan a man taketh
 an empyse that hym ought not to
 doo. or ellys he may it not doo. And
 that is callyd surqudry. Irreueren
 ce is whan a man doth not honoure
 there as hym ought to doo and way
 teth to be reuerenced. Pertynacy is
 whan a man defendeth his foly and
 trusteth to mykyl to his owen witte

Deph glozre is for to haue pompe
 and delpte in temporel hygnes and
 glozryse hym in worldy estates. Jan
 gelyng is whan a man spekyth to
 mykyl to fow folke & clappyth as
 a mylle and taketh no kepe what
 he sayth. And there is yet a pricy spy
 ce of pryde that wayteth first to be
 salowed or he salowe. all be he lesse
 worthy than that other it perauetur
 and eke he wayteth to sytte or to go
 aboue hym in the weye or kyssse pay
 or be sensyd or goo to offryng before
 his neyghbour & suche a prude despy
 re to be magnesyed & honoured be
 fow the peple. Now ben ther two
 maners of pryde that one of them is
 wythin the herte of a man. And that
 other is without. Of whiche forsaide
 thinges and moo than I haue sayde
 apperteynen to the pryde þ is wythin
 the herte of man. And there be also
 other spyces of pryde þ be withouten
 But neuertheles one of thysse spyces
 of pryde is spgne of that other. Right
 as the gay leffel of tauernes is signe
 of the wyn that is in the seler. And
 this is in many thynge as in speche
 in contenance in outrageousnes.

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of aray of clothyng Crist wolde not so sone haue noted & spoken of the clotnyng of that riche man in the gospel but yf it had be spynne. For as sayth saynt Gregore. Precyous clothyng is culpable for the derthe of it and for his strangenes. for his dysguyssynges and for the superfluyte or for the Inordynate scantnes. And to the fyrst spynne that is in superfluyte of clothyng. whiche that maketh it so dere to harm of the peple that on ly the coste of the enbrowdyng. The dysguyssyng endentyng. or barrayng. oundyng. palynge and semblable wise of clothyng in Banpse. There is also so cossew farrayng in gownes. And also mykyl poumsyng of chesell to make hoolys so mykyl daggyng of shers wyth the superfluyte in lengthe of the forsayd gownys trayling in the dung and in the myre on hors and eke on foot as wel of man as of woman. that al that treplyng is verly as in effect wasted. consumed treadybare and roten wyth dung rather than it is yeven to the poure. to grete damage of the forsayd poure folke and that in sondry wyse. thys is to sayn the more that cloth is wasted the more must it coste for the scantnes. And furtherouer yf they wolde yeven suche poumsyd and daggyd clothis to the poure folke. It is not conuenient to were for her estate ne sufficient to her necessyte. On that other syde for to speke of the dishordynat scantnes of clothyng as ben thysse cutted sloppis or hāselines þ through

her shortnes couer not the shamefull membres of a man to wycked entente. Alas somune of them shewe in the shap and the boas of the honnyble swollen membrys that semen like to the maladye of hyrma in the wrappyng of her hosyn and eke the buttockys of hem behynd that faren as is were the hynderparte as a sheape in the ful of the mone. And more ouer the wretchyd swelling membrys that they shewe in dysguyssyng in departyng of her hosyn whit and rede semeth that half the preuy membrys weren fleyn. And so by þ they departe their hoses in other colours as is whyte and black or whyt

Adn blewre or blacke and reed and so forth. Than semeth it as by Barpaunce of colour that half the parte of his preuy membrys ben corrupt by the syre of saynt Antoupe. or by Lanker. or by other suche mischauntes. yet of the hynderparte off her buttokis it is wel honnyble for to see for certes in that partye of her body there as they purgen her styngyng ordure. that full party shewe they proudly to the people in despyte of honeste. whiche honeste that Ihesu Crist and his frendes obserued to shewe in his lyf. Now as to outerageous aray of woman. god woote though the bysage of hem seme ful chaste & debonaire. yet notofyren they in theyr arape of a tyre. lychorousnes and pryde. I saye pot þ honeste in clothyng of man and woman is vncouenable

But certes the superfluyte or dysordi-
 nat skarcete of clotung is reprobable
 Also the synne of ornament or in ap-
 parell as in thynges that appertey-
 ne to rydng . as in many delycat
 horses that be holden for delyte by
 we . and also many vicious knaue
 mapntened by cause of them. And in
 curpous harnes as in saddles . cro-
 pers . peytrellys . and brydles coue-
 ryd wyth precious clouth and riche
 barres and plates of golde and syl-
 uer . for whiche god sayth by zakas-
 ry the prophete . I wyl consoide the
 ryders on suche horsis These folke
 taken lityl regarde of rydng of god-
 des sone and his harnes whan he
 rood vpon an asse and had none o-
 ther harnes but the clothis of poure
 disciples . Ne we rede not that he rode
 euer on ony ather beste . I speke thus
 that of superfluyte . not for the honeste
 whan reison it requyret . And set-
 ther ouer certes pryde is gretely noty-
 fyed in holdng of grete meyne whā
 they be of lityl prouffyt . And name-
 ly whan the meyne is felonous and
 domageous to the peple by hardy-
 nes of her lordship or by weye of of-
 fyce for certes suche lordys sellen her
 lordshippes to the deuyll of helle . whā
 they susteyne the wyckednes of her
 meyne . or ellys whan these folke off-
 lowe degre as they that holde hostel-
 ryes susteyn theft by their hostelers
 that is in many maners of discretes
 suche maner of folke ben the flyes h

folowen the hony . Or ellys the hou-
 des that folowen the careyn whiche
 forsayd folke stranglen spyrutually
 her lordship . for whiche dauyd saith
 wyckednes moot come on the lord-
 shippis . And god gyue that they mo-
 we descende down in to helle . for in
 her houses is inqute and strewd-
 nes and not god of heuen . And cer-
 tes yf thou doo no mendemēt right
 as god yaf his blyssng to laban by
 cause of Jacob and to Pharao for
 the setyce of Joseph . Right so wyl
 god yue his malison to suche lordes
 that susteyne the wyckednes of her
 seruauntes . But the romyn pryde of
 the table apperpyth eke su ofte . for
 certes riche men be clpyd to festys
 poure folk be put away and rebu-
 ked . And there is eycesse of dyuerse
 metes and drynkes and namely off
 curpous maner of bakmetis and
 of semblable wast so that it is abu-
 sion for to thynke . And eke in grete
 preciousnes of vessel and curiosite of
 mynstrelrye by the whiche a man
 is styred more to the delytes of luxu-
 ry . yf so be that he sette his herte the
 lesse vpon our lord Ihesu Cryst cer-
 tyn it is a synne . And certes the dely-
 cate metys and the delyte myght be soo
 grete in the caas h men myght the
 lyghtlyer falle on hem in to dedely
 synne . The spyces h souden of pry-
 de Sothly is whan they souden off
 malysce ymagyned and auysed and
 forncast or ellys of vsage . Ben dede-
 ly synnes it is no doubt . and whā they

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fourden by freelle vnaufsed sodeynly. ⁊ sodeynly wythdrawe agayn. al be they greuous synnes. I gess ⁊ suppose they be not dedely. Now myght men aye wherof that pryde souldeth ⁊ spryngeth. And I say þ̄ somtyme it spryngeth of goodes of nature. ⁊ somtyme of the goodes of fortune ⁊ sōtyme of the goodes of grace. certes the goodes of nature stōden in the goodes of body or of soule. certes the goodes of the body. be hele of body strēth despuernes. beaute. gentrye. ⁊ fraunchyse. The goodes of nature of the soule ben good witte sharpe vnderstonðyng. subtil engenye. virtuous naturel good memorye. Goodes of fortune ben ryches. hygh degrees of lordshippis ⁊ preysynges of the people. Goodnes of grace been scyence. power to suffre spirytuel traouayle. bevydnytees. vertuous contemplation wythstonðyng of temptation ⁊ semblable thynges. Of whiche forsayde goodes certes it is a grete folye a mā to pryden hym in ony of them alle: Now as for to speke of goodes off nature god wote that som tyme we haue hem in nature as moche to our domage as to our prouffyt. As for to speke of hele of body certes it passyth ful lyghtly. And eke it is ful of te thenchoson of the sekenes of the soule for god woot the flesshe is a ful grete enemye to the soule. And therfor the more that a body is hool. the more be we in payrl to falle. Like for to pryde hym in his strengthe off body it is a grete folye. For certes

the flesshe conceytedh ayenst the spyrite And euer the more strōger the flesshe is. the sorper may the soule be. And ouer al this strength of the body ⁊ worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many men to peryllle and mynchaunce. Like for to pryde hym of his gentrye. it is ful grete folye. For ofte tyme the gentrye of the body begynneth of the gentrye of the soule. And eke we be alle of one fader and of one moder. And al we ben of one nature rotyng and corrupt both riche ⁊ poure. for soth a maner gentrye is for to pryde þ̄ appareylleth mannes corage wyth vertues or moralptees. and makyth hym a crysten chyld. For trusteth wel that what mā that synne ouer maystryde is very choill to spume. Now ben there thre general thynges of gentylnes as eschewyng of vyces or rybauldrye. And seruage of synne in worde ⁊ werke in contenauce ⁊ vsyng vertu as curtesye clennesse ⁊ to be lyberalle that is to saye large by mesure. For that that passyth mesure is folye and synne Another is that he remembre hym of the bounte that he of other folke hath recepyd. Another is to beningne ouer his subgette. wherfore as sayth Senekke. There is nothyng more couenable to man of hygh estate than debonaryte. ⁊ these flesshe þ̄ men clepen bees whan they make her kynge. they chesen one that hath non prycke wherwyth he may synge. Another is a man to haue a noble herte and a dyligent tatteyn to

hye Vertuous thynges. Certes also who that pryde in the goodes off fortune he is ful lyke a greet sole. For somtyme a man is a full grete man by the morowe that is a wretche or a captif or it be nyght. & somtyme delytes or man ben cause of greuous maladye thorough whiche he depereth Certes the commendacyon of the peple is somtyme ful fals & full brotyl for to trust This day they preyse. to morowe they blame. god woot Like desyre to haue commendacion of the peple hath causyth deth to many a man. Now certes a man to pryde hym in the goodes of grace is eke an outrageous folye for the yefes of grace that shold haue tourned hym to goodnis & to medecyne tournyth to Venym and to confusion. as sayth saynt gregore. Now syth that so is that ye haue vnderstonde what is pryde and whiche be the spyces of it And how mennys pryde sourdeth and spryngyth Now shal ye vnderstonde which is the remedye against pryde. And that is humylyte or mekenes That is a vertu thrugh which man hath very knowleche of hymself and holdeth of hym self no deyn te ne no pryce as in regarde of his desertes consydetyng euer his frecke. Now ben there thre maners of humylyte. as humylyte in herte. and another in the mouth. And the thyrde in werkyng. The humylyte in herte is in foure maners that is whan a man holdeth hym self as nought worth

byfore god of heuen. Another is whan he despyseth non other man.

The thirde is. that he reekyth not though men hold hym nought The fourth is whan he is not sorry of his humylyacion. Also the humylyacion of mouth is in foure thynges In attēperat speche & whā he knoweth with his owen mouth he is suche as he thinke th he is in his herte. Another whan he preyseth the debonayrte of another man And also nothing therof amensith. Humylyte eke in werkyng is in four maners The first is whan he put men before hym. The second is to chese the lowest place. The thyrde is gladly to assente to good counceyl. The fourth is gladly to stonde in obedyence of his souerayn or of hym that is hygher in degre. Certes that is a grete wercke off humylyte.

Sequitur de Inuidia

After pryde wyl I speke off
a the foule synue of enuye.

whych that is as by the worde of the phylosophre sorowe off other mennys proussyt. And after the worde of saynt Augustyn it is sorowe of other mennys wele and Joye of other mennys harm. This foule synne is platly ayenst the holy ghoost. Al be it so that euery synne is ayenst the holy ghoost. yet for as moche as bounte apperteyneth to the holy ghooste properly. And enuye cometh properly of malice Therefore it is properly ayenst the

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Bounte of the hooky ghooft.

Now hath malysce two spyces that is to saye hardynes of herte and wyckednes. or ellys the flesshe of man is so blynde þ he cōsideryth not þ he is in synne. whiche is the hardynes off the deuyll. That other spyce of enuys is whan a man warrpyth ayenst trowth whan that he woote that it is trowth. And also whan he warrpyth the grace that god hath geue to hys neyghbour. And al this is enuys. Certes than is enuys the worst synne that is. for sothly al other synnes he somtyme ayenst one spycal vertue but certes enuys is ayenst all maner vertues and al goodnes for it is sorow of al bounte of his neyghbours.

And in this maner it is diuerse from al synnes for vincthe is there ony synne that it ne hath somme deslyte in hym saue only enuys that euer hath in hym self anguysshe and sorowe.

The spyces of enuys be thys. There is first sorowe of other mennys goodnes. And of her prosperyte ought to be kyndly mater off ioye. Thene is enuys a synne ayenst kynde. The seconde spyce of enuys is Ioye of other mennys harme.

Of this seconde spyce cometh bacbytyng or detraction that hath two spyces as thus. Som men preysse her neyghbour by wycked entente. for he maketh alway a wycked knotte at the last ende alway he maketh a but that is signe of more blame than worth is al the preysyng. The second spyce is that a man be good and do and saye a thyng to good entente.

The bacbyter wyl torne al the goodnes by soo down to his shrewde entente. The thurd is to amenuse the bounte of his neyghbour. The fourthe spyce of bacbytyng is this that if men speke godnes of a man the bacbyter wyl saye. per say yet is suche a man better than he in dyspreysyng of hym that men prayse. The fyfthe is to consente gladly to herke the harme that men speken of other folke. This synne is ful grete and by encreysyth after the wycked entente of the bacbyter. After bacbytyng comyth grutchyng or murmuraunce. And somtyme it spryngeth of Impacience ayenst god and somtyme ayenst man. Ayenst god is whan a man grutchyth agaynst the peyne of helle or ayenst pouerte or losse of catel or ayenst rayn or tempest. or ellys grutcheth that shrewdes haue prosperyte. or ellys that gode men haue aduersyte.

And alle thysse thynges shold men suffre patiently. for they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordynauce of god. Somme tyme cometh grutchyng of auarysce as Judas grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she anonnted the hede of our lorde Ihesu Cryst wyth her precyous oynement. This maner of mutmur is suche as whan men grutchen of goodnes. off that men hem self doon. or that other folke doon of her owen catel:

Somtyme cometh mutmur of pryde as whan Symon the Pharysee grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she approchyd to Ihesu Cryste.

The Persons Tale

And wept at hys feet for her synnes

And somtyme it sourdeth of eny eye whan man dyscouereth a manys harm that was pryue or beryth hym on honde thyng that is fals.

Murmur is eke ofte amonge seruauntes whan her souerayns bydden hem doo leful thynges.

And for as moche as they dar not openly wythsaye the commaundement of her mayster. yet wyl they saye harme and grutche and murmure pryuely for very despyte. whycher wordes men clepe the deuyls Pater noster. Though so be the deuyll had neuer Pater noster.

But that folke yeue suche a name. somtyme it comyth of Ire or of pryue hate that noryssheth rancoure in herte as after I shal declare.

Thenne cometh eke bytternes of herte Through whycher bytternesse euery good dide of hys neyghbour semeth to hym bytter and vsfauoure.

Than comyth dyscorde that vnbryndeth alle maner of frenshyp.

Thenne comyth scompyng of hys neyghbour al doo he neuer so well. thenne comyth accusyng as whan man seken occasyon to annoye hys neyghbour. whiche that is lyke the craft of the deuyll that wayth bothe nyght and daye to accusen vs alle.

Thenne cometh malynyte through whycher a man nopeth hys neyghbour pryuely yf he may.

And yf he nought may algate his wycked wyl shal not wante as for to brenne hys hous pryuely or em-

poysen hym or flee hys beestys and semblable thynges.

Now wyl I speke of the remedye of thys foule synne of enuye.

And the first is the loue off god pryncypally and louynge of hym self and of hys neyghbour.

For sothly that one may not be without that other. And cryst wyl in the name of thy neyghbour þ thou shalt vnderstonde thy broder. For certes al we haue one fader flesshly and one moder that is to saye Adam and Eue. And eke one fader spirytuel. that is to saye god of heuen.

Thy neyghbour art thou holde for to loue and wyl hym alle goodnes. And therfore sayth god. loue thy neyghbour as thy self that is to saye to lyf and to soule and saluation.

And more ouer thou shalt loue hym in worde and benygne chere and mouysshyng and chastysyng in a voyce to comferte hym and praye for hym wyth alle thy herte. And in dede thou shalt loue hym in suche wyse þ thou shalt do to hym in charyte as thou woldest were don to thy owne persone. And therfore thou shalt doo to hym no domage in wycked worde ne harme in his body ne in his castel ne in his soule by entyng of wycked ensample. Thou shalt not desyre his wyf ne none of his thynges. vnderstonde eke that in the name of thy neyghbour is comprehendyd his enemye. certes a mā shal loue his enemye for the commaundement of god. a sothli thy frede shal thou loue i god

Ifaye the enemye shalle thou loue
 for goddys sake by his commaun-
 dement. For it were reson a man
 shold hate his enemye. for soth god
 wyl not receyue vs to his loue that
 ben his enemyes. Apenst thre maner
 wronges that his enemye doth to him
 he shal doo thre thynges as thus. a-
 penst hate and rancoure of herte he
 shal loue hym in herte. ayenst chy-
 dyng and wycked wordes he shall
 praye for his enemye. Apenst the wic-
 ked dede of his enemye he shall doo
 hym bounte. For cryste sayth loueth
 youre enemyes & prayeth for hem þ
 speluyth you harme & eke for them þ
 pow chasen and pursuen: dooboun-
 te to hem that you haten.

Lo thus commaunded vs our lord
 Ihesu Cryste to do to oure enemyes
 for soth nature dryueth vs to loue ou-
 re frendes. And persey oure enemyes
 haue more nede to loue than our fren-
 des And they that more nede haue
 Certes to hem shal we doo goodnes.
 and certes in that dede haue remem-
 braunce of the loue of Ihesu Cryste
 that depde for his enemyes. And for
 as moche as that loue is the more gre-
 uous to perfourme. so moche is mo-
 re grete the meryte. And therefore the
 souynge of our enemye hath confor-
 ded the venym of the deuyl. For
 ryght as the deuyl is conspyted by hu-
 mylyte. Right so is he wounded to
 the deth by the loue of our enemye.
 Certes than is loue medycine that
 chaseth out the venym of enemye fro
 manny's herte.

Sequitur de Ira

fter enemye wyl I decla-
 re of the spynne of Ire.

a For soth he that hath
 enemye vpon his neygh-

bour: Anon compynly wyl finde him
 mater of wrath in worde or in dede.
 Apenst hym to whom he hath enemye
 for: sothly he that is proud or enemy-
 ous is lyghly wroth. This spynne of
 Ire after dyscrypnyng of saynt Au-
 gustyn is wycked wyl to be auen-
 gyd by worde or by dede.

Ire after the Pphylosophre is the ser-
 uent bloode of man y quykken in
 his herte. through whiche he wyl har-
 me to hym that he hateth.

For certes the herte of a man by en-
 chafnyng and meuyng of his bloode
 wepyth so troubled that he is out of al
 Jugement of resons. But ye

shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two
 maners. Don of them is goode and
 that other is wycked.

The good Ire is by Ielousye of god-
 nes through the whiche a man is wro-
 the with wyckednes and agayn wic-
 kednes. And therefore sayth the
 wyse man that pre is better than pla-
 ye. this Ire is wpyth deboneprie and
 it is wrath wythout bytternes not
 wroth agaynst the man. but wroth
 with the mysdede of the mā as saith
 the pphete. Irascimini et nolite pec-
 care. Now vnderstode þ wycked pre
 is in two maners þ is to say sodeyn
 pre or hasty pre wythout auysement

The Persons Tale

and consentyng of hys reson. The meynyng and the sense of this is that reson of a man ne consentith not to that sodeyn pre. And than it is denyd at Another pre is that is ful wycked that cometh of felonye of herte auyfed & cast byfore wyth wycked wyl to doo vengeance. & therto his reson consentyth & sothly this is dedely synne. This pre is so displeysant to god that it troubllyth his hous and chasith the holy goost out of mannyes soule and put in hym the seknes of the deuyl and benymeth the man fro god that is his righful lord This pre is a ful grete plesaunce to the deuyl for it is the deuilles furneyns that he enchaunsith with the fyre of helle. For certis as fyre is more myghty. to dystrope ertly thynge than a nother element. Right so ire is myghty to dystrope alle spirituall thynge. Loke how that fyre of smale gledes h be almoost dede vnder asshen wyl quycken apen whan they be touchid with brymstone. right so pre wol euer more quycken apen whan it is touchid with pryde h is couerid in mannyes herte. for certis pryde may nat come out of no thynge but if it were first in the same thing naturallly. as fyre is drawyn out of flyntes with steel. right so is pryde a mater of pre. right as rancour is nourisher & keepar therof There is a maner tree as sayth saynt Isodore. That whan men make fire of that tre and couer the colys of hit wyth asshen. Sothly

the fyre therof wol laste al a yere or more. And ryght so farith it by rancour. Whan he is ones conceyued in the hertes of somme men. Certes it wyl laste perauenture from one efter day tyl on other or more. But certes h man is ful ferre from the mercy of god al that whyle. In this forsayde deuillys forneys they forgen thre shrewys. Pryde than bloweth and encreaseth the fyre by chydnyng & wycked wordes. Thenne stondesth enuye and holdeth the pryn vpon the hertes of men. wyth a prayer of long tonges wyth longhe rancour. And thenne stont the synne of contynuell stryf and cheest and berith and forgyth the vylayns reprovynge. Certes this cursyd synne anoyeth both the man hym self and eke his neyghbour. for sothly almost al the harm that one man doth to his neyghbour cometh of wrath. for certis outrageous wrath doth al that euer the deuyl commaundeth hym for he spareth nether for Crist ne for his swete moder in his outrageous anger and pre but speketh and sklaundryth his neyghbour. this is a cursyd lyf whiche lyf shold be debonayr & sprytle that shold kepe his soule Certes this pre or wrath bynymeth eke goddys due lordshyp & that is mannyes soule & the loue of his neyghbours. it stryuyth al way eke aynst trouth it reueth hym the quete of his herte and subuertith his soule Dpyre comen thysse stynkyng engendrures. First hate h is olde wrath renewyd

through whiche a man forsaketh his owen friend that he hath louid so long. ⁊ thenne comyth werre ⁊ euery maner of wrong þ a man doth to his neyghbour in body or in catel. Of this cursyd synne of Tre cometh eke manslaughter. And vnderston deth wel þ manslaughted is in dyuerse wyse. Somme maner of manslaughter is spiritual. And som bodely. Spyrituell manslaughter is in vi. thynges. first by hate as sayth seint Iohn he that hateth his broder is an homycyde. Manslaughter is eke by bacbytyng of whiche bacbytour saith salamon that they haue two swer dys wyth whiche they sle her neyghbours. for sothly as wycked it is to benyme his good name as his lyff. homycide is eke in peyning of wycked counceyl by fraude. or for to peue counceyl for to areyse wrangfull customys and talagys of whiche speketh Salamon. Upon roryng and bere hungry ben lykenid to cruel lordes In wythholdyng or abredgyng of the hyre or wagys of poure folke for whiche the wyse man sayth fede þe hym that almost dyeth for hungry. for sothly but þ thou fede hym thou sleeest hym. And al thys ben dedely synnes. Bodely manslaughter is whan thou sleeest hym wyth thy tunge. Another maner is whan thou commaundest to sle a man or ellys peuest hym counceyl to slee a man Manslaughter in dede is in four maners. That one is by lawe. ryght as

a Justice damped hym that is culpable to the deth. but lete the Justice be. waar that he do it rightfully and þ he doo it not for deylte to spille blood but for keepyng of right wysnes. Another homycyde is don for necessite as whan a mā sleeth another his defendaunt and that he ne may otherwyse ascape fro his owen deth. But certeyn aud he may escape wythout slaughter of his aduersarye ⁊ sleeth hym he doth synne. And he shal bere penaunce as for dedely synne. Eke þ a man by caas or auenture shete an arrowe or cast a stoon wyth whiche he sleeth a man it is homycyde. Eke þ a woman by necligence o uerlyeth her chyldre in slepyng It is homycyde and dedely synne. Eke whan a man destroyeth conception of a chyldre or makyth a woman barren by drynkes of venymous herbes through whiche she may not conceyue. Or sleeth her chyldre by drynkes. or ellys putteth certeyn materys althynge in her secrete place to sle her chyldre Or ellis doth vnkynde synne by whiche man or woman shedyth his nature in place there as a chyldre may not be conceyued. Or ellis þ a woman haue conceyued ⁊ hurte her self ⁊ sleeth her chyld. þet is it homycyde what saye we eke of women þ murtheren her chyldren for drede of wordely shame. Certes it is eke an horryble homycyde. Eke þ a man aprouche to a woman by desyre of lecherye through whiche the chyldre is perysshed ellys smyteth a

The Persons Tale

woman weepingly by which her chil-
 de is slayn Alle thysse ben homycides
 and dedely horribly synnes. yet co-
 myn of yre many moo synnes as in
 worde in thought in dede as wel as
 he that aretteth vpon god or blasphe-
 myth god of whiche he is hym self
 gyilty or dyspyseth god and alle his
 halowes as donthysse cursyd hasour
 dours in dyuerse contrees. This cur-
 syd synne do they whan they seplen
 in her herte ful wyckedly of god &
 hys halowes Also whan they treten
 vpon worthely the sacrament of the a-
 wter. Thyslike synne is so grete. that
 vnnethe may it be releuid but by the
 mercy of god passyth his werkyng
 whiche mercy is grete and benygne.
 There cometh also of yre a teyr an-
 ger whan a man is sharply amones-
 shed in his shrift to forlete hys synne
 Than wyl he be angry and answere
 or pryly & angerly to defende or ex-
 cuse his synne. by vnystedfastnes of
 his flessh. or ellys he dyd it for to hot-
 de company wyth his felawes. or els
 he sayth. the fendes entysed hym or
 ellys he dyd it for his yowth or ellys
 his complexyon is so corageous by
 he may not forbere. ellys it is desty-
 ne as he sayth vnto a certeyn age. or
 ellys he sayth it comyth hym of gny-
 tylnes of his auctyres & semblable
 thynges Al thysse maner of folke so
 wrappyn them in her synnes by they
 wyl not delpuer hem self. For sothly
 no wyght that excusyth hym wilful-
 ly of his synne. may be delpued off
 his synne tyl he mekely beknowith

his synne After thenne cometh swe-
 ryng that is expres ayenst the com-
 mandment of god & this be fallyth
 of anger & of yre. God sayth thou
 shalt not take the name of thy lord
 in ydyl Also our lord Ihu cryst sayth
 by the worde of saynt mathew. ne
 wyl ye to swere in al maner. neyther
 by heuen for it is goddys trone ney-
 ther by erthe for it is the bench off
 his feet. ne by iherusalem for it is the
 cyte of a grite kyng. ne by thyng her-
 de. for thou ne mayst make an heer
 whyte ne black. but your othe shal
 be. ye. ye. nay. nay. And what that is
 more euyl. thus sayth cryst. For cris-
 tes sake swere ye not so synfully in
 dismembryng of Cryst. by soule. her-
 te. bones. and body. For ye thynke by
 the cursyd Jewes dismembryd hym
 not ynough but ye dysmembre hym
 more And yf so be that lawe compel-
 le you to swere thenne rule you af-
 ter the lawe of god in your sweryng
 As sayth saynt Therome the fourth
 chappytre. Thou shalt kepe
 thre condycions. Thou shalt swe-
 re in trouth. in dome & in right wys-
 nes. This is to save thou shalt
 swere soth. for euery lespug is ayenst
 Cryste. for Cryste is very trouth.
 And thynke wel this that euery grete
 sweter not compellyd laussfully to
 swere. the plaghe of vengeaunce shal
 le not parte from hys hows whyles
 he dysyth suche vnlawful sweryng.
 Thou shalt eke swere in dome when
 tho art compellyd by the domes mā to

The Persons tale

Wytnesse the trouthe. & ke thou shalt not swere for enuie. for sauour. for mede but for right wysnys for declarng of trouthe to the worship of god & to helpng of thyn eyn crysten. & therfor euery man that takyth gods name in ydle or falsly swereth wpyth his mouth. or ellys taketh on hym the name of cryst to be callyd a crysten man and lyueth ayenst crysten lyuynge & his techynge. Al they take goddis name in ydle. Loke eke what saith saint peter actuum quar to. there is none other name vnder heuen geuen to man in whiche they moot be sauyd. That is to saye but in the name of Ihu cryst. Take kepe eke how that precious name off Ihu cryst as sayth saynt Poule at philypenses In nomine Ihu etc.

That in the name of Ihu euery kene of heuynly creature or ertlyly or of helle shol lowen. for it is so high & so worshipful that the cursyd fende in helle shold tremble for to here hit named than semed it that men þ swere so horrybly his blessed name that they despise it more boldly than dyd the cursyd Jewes þ tremeleden whan they herde his name. Now cetes syth þ sweryng but it be doo all lawfully is so hooly defenden moche werse is for to swere falsly & eke nedeles.

What saye we eke of them that deluyten them in sweryng and holde it a gentyce or manly dede to swere grete othis. and what of them that of very vsage necessite not to swere grete othes and al the cause not worthe

a strawe. Certes this is horryble synne. Sweryng also wpythout auysement is eke synne. But late vs go now to that cursyd and horryble sweryng of adiuracion and conuraciõ as don thys fals enchauntours and nygromancers in basyns ful of water. Or in a bygght swerde. In a arcle or in a fyre. or in a sholdre boon of a sheep I can not saye but they do cursydly & dampnably ayenst criste and alle the feith of holy chirche.

What saye by them that belyuen in dym napolis as by slyght or by noyle of byrds and of bestys or by sorte. by nygromancye. by dreames. By chyrchynge of dorys by gnawynge of rattys or crackynge of housys and suche maner of wretchydnes. Certes al this thyng is defende of god and eke holy chirche. for whiche they be cursyd tyl the come to amendement. þ on suche fylthe sette their beleue.

Charmys for woldys & maladyes of men or of bestys. yf they take ony effect. it may perauenture þ god suffreteth it. for men shold gyue the more feyth & reuerence to his name. Now wyl I repeke of lesynges whiche generally is fals significaciõ of word wpyth entent to disceyue his euen cristen. Som lesyng there is of whiche cometh non auauitage to no wyght. And som lesyng cometh to the ese & prouffyt of a man & to domage of a nother man. Another lesyng for to saue his lyp or catel. Another lesyng comyth of delpte. They wyl forge a longe tale and pepnte it with

The Persons Take

al circumstaūcis wherof al the groude is fals. Somme lesyng comyth for he wyl susteyne his worde. And somme lesyng comyth of rechelesnes wythouten awysment and semblable thynges. Lete vs now touche the vyce of flaterye. whiche cometh not gladly but for drede or for couetyse. flatterye is generally wrangful preyng. flaterers ben the deuyls norpces that norpsseth his chyldren wyth the mylke of losengery.

For soth sayth salamon that flaterye is worse than detraction. For somtyme detraction makyth an haunteyn man be the more humble for he dredeth detraction. But certeyn flaterye maketh a man to enhaunce his herte and his contenauce. flaterers ben the deuyles enchaoutours for they maken a man to wenen hym self be lyke. that he is not lyke. They be lyk Judas that betrayed god. And thys flaterers betraye a man to selle hym to this enmye that is the deuyll. flaterers ben the deuylls chappelynes that synge euer placebo. I reken flaterye in vyce of Ire. For ofte tyme yf a man be wroth with another thenne wyl we flater somme wyght to susteyne hym in his quarrelle.

Speke we now of suche cursing as comyth out of prouis hertes. Malyson may be sayd generally euery maner power of harm. suche cursing beteuech a mā the regne of god. As sayth saynt Poule. And of suche cursing wrongfully retorneth aye to hym that cursyth. As a byrde

retorneth agayn to his owen neste. And ouer alle thyng men ought leschere to curse her chyldren and to yeue to the deuyll her engendrure as ferforth as in hem is. Certes it is a grete peryl and a grete synne. Lete vs then speke of chydyng and reueryng whiche ben grete woundes in manys herte. For certes vnnethe may a mā be playnly accorded with hym that he hath openly reueryd. reueryd and dysclaudred this is a ful grisly synne. As Cryste sayth in the gospel. And take ye kepe now that he þ reueryth his neyghboure by some harme or by somme peyn þ he hath in his body. as mesyl. croked hartote: or by somme spgne tha he doth. Now yf he reueryth hym by harm of peyne. thenne retorneth the reuery to Ihesu Cryste. For peyn is sent by the right wys sonde of god and by his suffraūce. be it meselre or mayne or maladye.

And yf he reuerye hym vncharitably of synne. thou holour. thou drou kelewe hartot and soo forth thenne apperteyned it to reueryng of the deuyll that euer hath ioye that men don synne. And certes chydyng may not come but of vpleynous herte. For after haboundaunce of the herte spekethe the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul vnderstonde whan ony man chastyseth another þ he bewar fro chydyng or reueryng. For trewly but he be waar he may ful lyghly quylken the spre of angre and of wrath whiche that he shal not quench.

Comme is my nady
 felfat in your h
 no wate dull of in aye

The Persons tale

And peraventure sleeth hym that he
 myght chastyse wyth benygnyte.

For as sayth Salamon. The
 myable tongue is the tre of lyp. that
 is to saye of lyp spyrituel. And a dis
 laue tongue sieth the spirites of hym
 that is repreuyd.

Lo what sayth
 saint Austyn There is no thing like
 the deuyllys chyfde as he that oft chy
 deth. Saynt Poule sayth eke. I ser
 uauant of god behoue not to chyde.

And who that chydyng is a vyleins
 thyng betwyyt alle maner folke.

pet pet is it certes most vncouenable
 betwyyt a man and his wyf. For

there is neuer reste And therfor saith
 Salamon. An hous that is vncoue

ryd in rayn and droppng. and a
 chydyng wyf be lyke. a man that is

in a droppng hous in many places
 thought he eschewe the droppng in

one place. it droppyth on hym in a
 nother place.

So sayth it by a
 chydyng wyf but she chyde hym in

one place she wyl chyde hym in ano
 ther place. And therfore better is a

morcel breed wyth ioye. than a hous
 ful of delytes wyth chydyng. Lo

what Salamon and saynt Poule
 sayn. Oye wommen be ye sub

gettys to your husbondys as beho
 ueth in god. And ye men loue your

wyufs. Afterward we speke off
 scornng whiche is a wycked syn

ne and namely whan he scorneth a
 man by hys goode werkys. For

certes suche scornes faren lyke the
 foule tode that may not endure to

smelle the swete sauour of the wyne
 whan it stoyffshyth. These scorners

ben partng feiwes wyth the deuyl
 for they haue Ioye whan the deuyl

wynneth and sory whan he leysyth
 They ben aduersaryes to Ihesu crys

te. For they haten that he loueth that
 is to saye sauacion of so wle. Speke

we now of the wycked counceyl.
 For he that wycked douncepille ye

ueth is a treptour. For he dyscey
 ueth hym that trusteth in hym. But

neuertheles pet is wycked counceyll
 apenst hym self. For as sayth the

wyse man. Euery fals lypng hath
 his properte in hym self. For he

that wyl anoye another man ano
 yeth first hym self. And men shak vn

derstonde that a man shal not take
 his counceyl of false folke ne of an

gry folk or greuous folk ne of folk
 plouen speryally her owen proufyt

ne to moche worldly folke. name
 ly in counceyllng of foolis.

Now comyth the synne of them that
 maken discorde among folk. whi

che is a synne that Cryste hateth vt
 terly. And no wonder is. for he deped

for to make conorde. And more
 shame don they to cryst thā dyd they

that hym crucifyed. For god loueth
 better that frenshyp be among folkie

than he dyd his owen body whiche
 he gaf for vnyte. Therefore be they ly

kenyd to the deuyl that euer is abou
 te to make dyscorde. Now comyth

the synne of double tongue for suche
 as speke sayt befor men and wyck

edly behynde. or ellys they make

ye all yware
 will for refuse
 some est a
 fymd est
 est aiant
 hat in your
 refusen will
 of in eye all
 wate will for
 refuse
 refuse in
 papers
 book
 The
 found
 pure idy is
 the hris
 founoz of the
 booke

semblaunt as though they speken of good entencion. or ellys in game & pleye. And they speken of wycked entente Now comyth the wreyng of counceyl. thurgh whiche man is defamed vntethys may he restore the damage. Now comyth manace that is an open folpe. For he that openly manaceth he threteneth more thenne he may ouercome ful ofte tyme.

Now comen ydle wordys þ be wpyth out prouffyt of hym that speketh the wordes and eke of hym that herkynyth the wordes. Or ellys ydle wordes ben tho that ben needeles or wpyth oute entente of naturell prouffyt.

And al be it that ydle wordes be som tyme venyal synne. yet shalke men doubtte hem. For we shal yeue rekeynyng of hem before god. Now comyth Jangelynge that may not comyth out synne as sayth Salamon It is a spgne of appert folpe

And therfore a phylosophre sayde whan a man ayed hym how men shold plese And he answeyrd do many good werkys & speke fewe Jangelynge. After this cometh the synne of Japers that been the deuelys appys. For they make folke to longe at her Japerye as folke don at gwades of an ape. Suche Japers defendeth saynt Poule. Loke how that Vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that traueylen in the scrupure of Cryst. Ryght so comforten the Bybleyns wordes and the knackys of Japers hem that traueylen in the scrupure of the deuyl. All thys ben the

synnes of the tonge that comyn offpre & of other synnes. The remedye a penyntre is a Vertu that cleped is mansuetude that is deboneyrte. and eke another Vertu that men clepes pacience. saynt Iherome sayth thus of debonayrte that it doth harme to no wyght ne sayth none harm that men hym doo ne synne ne chaungeth not a penynt reson. This Vertu cometh somtyme of nature. For as sayth the phylosophre a man is a quyt & thynge by nature debonayrte and treta ble by goodnes. But whan debonayrte is enformed of grace hit is the more worthy. Pacience is another remedye a penyntre and is a Vertu þ men suffre swetly euery mannes godnes. and is not worth for none harme that is don to hym The phylosophre sayth that pacience is that Vertu that suffreth debonayrly al the outrage of aduersyte. and euery wycked worde. This Vertu maketh a man lyke to god & makyth hym his owen dere chyld. As sayth cryst this Vertu dyscomfyeth thyn enemye.

And therfore faith the wyse man yff thou wolt veynquyssh thyn enemye see that thou be patient. Suffraunce is another Vertu a penyntre. And þ is whan he suffreth swetly alle annoyauce & the wronges that men do a man outward. Thou shalt vnderstonde that a man suffreth four maner of greuaunce in outward thinges Aienst which four he must haue foure maner of paciēce. the first greuaunce is wickid wordes. þ greuaunce suffreth

Ihesu cryst wythout greutchyng wel pacyenty whan the Jewes despyced hym a reprovyd hym ful ofte. Suffer thou therfore patiently. For the wyse mā saith yf thou stryue with a fool if the sole be wroth or though he laugh. Al gat thou shalt haue no rest þoother greuauce outward is to haue domage of thy catel. There apenst suffred cryst ful paciency whan he despoyled was of al þeuer he had in this lyf and that nas but clothes.

The thirde greuauce is to a man to haue greuauce in his body That suffred cryst ful paciency in alle his passyon. The fourth greuauce is in outrageous labour in werk is wherfore I say that folk that maken her seruantes to traueylle to greuouly out of tyme as in holy dayes. Soth ly they doo grete synne. here apenst suffred Cryst ful paciency a taught vs paciency whan he bare vpon his blessyd sholdres the crosse vpon whiche he shold suffre despytous dethe. here may men lerne to be paciency. For certes not only crysten men be paciency for the loue of Ihesu Cryst a for guerdon of the blisse of heuen and of the blessyd lyf that is perdurable.

But certes the olde paynens that neuer were crystenyd comendyd and vsyd the vertu of paciency. A phylosophre vpon a tyme that wold haue beten his disciple for his grete trespasses. for whiche he was greteky a meuyd and brought a yerde to scourge the chylde And whan the chylde

sawe the yerde he sayd to his mayster what wyl ye do I wyl bethe qd the master for thy correctio for soth quod the chylde ye ought fyrst correcte your self that hath lost your paciency for the gylt of a chylde: for soth said the mayster al wepyng thou seyst soth haue thou the yerde my dere sone a correct me for myn vnpaciency. Off paciency comyth obedyence thurgh whiche a man is obedyent to crist a to alle them to whiche he ought to be obedyent to cryst. And vnderstonde wel þ obedyency is persyght whā men doo gladly and hastely wyth good herte entierly al that he sholde doo obedyency generally is to persourme the doctryne of god and to his souerayns to whiche hym ought to be obeyssaunt in al right wysnes.

Sequitur de Accidia

After the synne of wrath I a wyl speke of the synne off accidye or slouth. for enuye blyndeth the herte of man. And Ire troubleth a mā And accidye maketh hym heuy thoughtful and wrewe. Enuye a ire maken bitternes in herte. whiche bitternes is moder off accidye and benymet him the loue of alle goodnes. thenne is accide the angre of a trouble herte. And Saynt Austyn sayth It is anoye of goodnes and annoye of harme.

Certes this is a dampnable synne for it doth wronge to Ihesu Cryste in as moche as he benymeth the

seruyre that men ought to do to Ihesu Cryste wyth al dyligence.

As sayth Salamon. But accidye doth none suche dyligence. He doth alle wyth annoye & wraunes slaknes. excusacion dulnesse and vnlust.

For whiche the booke sayth acurysyd be he that doth the seruyse of god. necligently. thenne is accidye enemye to euery estate of man for the estate of man is in thre maners. Epyther it is estate of Innocence as was the state of Adam before or that he syl in synne in whiche estate he was holde to worche as in heeryng and adouryng of god.

Another estate is estate of superfluyte. In whiche estate men beholden to laboure in prayyng to god for amendement of her synnes.

Another estate is in the estate of grace. In whiche estate is he holden to doo werkyes of penytence And certes to alle thysse thynges is accidye enemye and contrary for he sloupyth no besynes at alle. Now certes this foule synne of accydye is eke a ful grete enemye to the lyue of the body. for it hath no purueaunce apenst temporel necessyte. for it is slouthyd and forsloggyd and destropeth alle goodes temporell by rechelesnes. the fourth thyng is that accydye is lyke hem that ben in the peyn of helle by cause of slouth and of her heynnes. For they that be dampned be so bounde that nether may they doo wel ne thynke wel.

Of accydye cometh first that a man

is anoyed and encombyrd to do ony goodnes and maketh that god hath abhomyncyon of suche accydye as sayth saynt Iohan. Now comyth slouth that wyl suffre no hardnes ne no penaunce for soth slouth is so delicate and so tendre as sayth salamon that he wyl suffre non hardnes ne penaunce and therefore he shendeth al þe he doth. Apenst this roten horpd synne of accydye or slouthe sholde men exercyse hem to do good werkyes & manly and vyrtuously catchen corage wel to doo. Thynkyng that our lord Ihesu Cryste quyteth euery good dede be it neuer so lytyl vsage of it is a grete thyng. for it maketh as sayth Saynt Bernard the laboret to haue strong armys and harde synewys. And slouth maketh hem feble and tendre.

Than comyth drede for to begynne to werkye ony good werkyes. For certes he that is enclyned to synne hym thynketh it is to grete an empryse for to vndertake to doo werkyes of goodnes as sayth Saynt Gregore.

Now comyth wanhope that is dyspayr of the mercy of god that comith somtyme of to mykyl outrageous sorowe and somtyme of mykyl drede ymagynyng that he hath doo so moche that it wolde not auaylle him though he wold repente hym and do goode. Thruogh whiche dyspar or drede. he aboundeth his herte to euery maner synne. As sayth Saynt Augustyn. whiche þ is dampnable

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John

if it contynue to his ende. it is cleped
synnyng in the holy ghoost.

This horryble synne is so perryous
that he that is dyspeyred that there is
no felonye ne no synne that he doub
teth for to doo as shewed wel by Ju
das.

Certes therne aboun alle
is this synne most dyspleysaunt and
most aduersary to Cryst. Certes he
that dyspeyreth is lyke the cowarde
champon recreaunt and nedeles dis
peyret. For certes the metry of god
is euer redy to the penytent. Hit is
aboue al his werkys. Alas can not
a man bethynke hym on the gospel
of saynt Luke. Luce xv. where as
Cryst sayth that as wel shalle there
be more Joye in heuen vpon a syn
ful man that doth penytence than v
pon nyenty and iij. ryghtfull men þ
neden no penytence. Loke farther in
the gospel the Joye and the festis off
the good man that had lost his sone
whan his sone wyth repentaunce was
retorned to his fader. Can they not
remembrecke as sayth saynt Luke
xxiii. How that the theef that was
hanged besyde Ihesu. Sayde lord re
membre on me whan thou comest
to thy regne for soth said Cryst. this
day shalt thou be wyth me in para
dys. Certes there is none soo horryble
synne of man that it ne may in hys
lyf be destroyed by penytence thrugh
Vertu of the passyon of Cryste.

Alas what nedeth man thenne to be
dyspeyred sythen his mercy is so re
redy. aske and haue. Thenne co

meth sompnisence that is sluggy
sumbernyng whiche makyth a man
to be heuy and dul in body and in so
wle And this synne cometh of slouth
And certes the tyme as by weye off
reson men shold not slepe that is by
the morowe but yf it were cause reso
nable. for soth in the morow is most
counnable a man to say his preyers
& for to thynke on god & to honou
re god and to gyue almes to the pou
re that first comen in the name off
cryst. Lo what Salamon sayth.
who so wyl by the morowe a wake
to seke me he shal fynde me.

Thenne cometh necligence or reche
lesnes that rekyth of no thyng.

And how that Ignorauce is moder
of alle harme. Certes necligence is
the noryce. necligence doth no force
whan he shold doo a thyng whether
he doo it wel or badly. Of the reme
dye of thysse two synnes as sayth the
wyse man that he that dredeth god
sparyth not to doo that hym ought
to doo. And he that souyth god wyl
do diligence to please god by his wer
kys and habounden hym self wyth
at his myght wel for to doo. Thenne
cometh ydlenes that is the pate of all
harmys an ydle man is lyke to a
place that hath no wallys the deuyll
may entre on euery syde. This ydles
nes is the thurrozk of alle vyleyns &
wycked thoughtes and of alle Jan
glys. trifflys & al ordure. Certes heue
is geuen to hem that wyl laboure &
not to ydle men. Eke dauid sayth.

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That they be not in the labour off men ne they shall not be whyppe wyth men that is to saye in purgatory. Certes thene semyth it they shall be tormentyd wyth the deuyl in hel. but yf they doo penytence. Thene comyth the synne that men clepen trodytas as whan a man is so lettid and so tarped or he wyl turne to god and certes that is a grete folye. he is lyke hym that falleth in the dyche & wyl not aryse. And this vice comyth of fals hope that he thynketh that he shall lyue long but that hope fayleth fut oft. Thene comyth laches that is he that whan he begynneth any good werke anon he wyl forsake it and stynte as doo they that haue any wyght to gouerne and take off hym ne kepe. Anon as they synde or ny contrarpe or any anoye. Thys ben the newe shepherdes that leten her sheep wptyngly goo renne to the wolf that is in the breces and do no force of her owen gouernance. Off this comyth pouerte and destruction both of spiritual and temporel thynges. Thene comyth a maner of coldnes that freseth alle the herte of man. Thene comyth vndeoucion thurgh whiche a man is so blont. As sayth saynt Bernard and hath suche languour in his soule that he ne may rede ne synge in holy chyrchen e here ne thynke of deuocion ne traueple with his hondes in no good werke but it is to hym vsfauorpe and alle apalyd thene weyith he sore sluggyshe

and slumbry & soon wyl he be wroth and soon is enclyned to hate and to enuye. And thene comyth the synne of worldly sorowe. that is clepyd tristitia. that sleeth a man as saith saint Poule. for certes suche sorowe werkyth to the deth of the deth of the soule and of the body also. for therof comyth that a man is anoyed of his owen lyf for suche sorowe shortyth the lyf of many a man or that his tyme come by waye of kynde. Apenst this horryble synne of accidye & the braunchis of the same there is a vertue that is called fortitudo or strengthe that is affection thurgh whiche man despyseth alle other thynges no yous. This vertu is so myghty and so bygorous that it dar wyth stande myghtyly & wrafile apenst the sawtes of the deuyl and wysely kepe himself fro parrellys that ben wycked. for it enhaüsyth & enforseyth the suol. Right as accidye abateth it & makyth it feble for this fortitudo may endure wyth long suffraunce the trauepleys that ben couenable. This vertu hath many spyes the first is clyped magnanymyte that is to saye grete corage. for certes there behoueth grete corage apenst accyde lest that hit swalowe the sowle by the synne off sorowe or destrope it wyth wanhope. This maketh folke to vndertake hard and greuous thynges by her owen wyl wysely and resonably. And for as moche as the deuyl fighteth apenst man more by queyntise and by

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theyght than by strengthe therefore a man shal wythstande hym by wyt by reason and by discrecion. Thenne ben there the vertues of feyth and hope in god and in his sayntes to achyueu and complpyke the good werkes in whiche he purposeth firmly to cōtinue. Thenne comyth sewerte and sykernes. And that is whan a man doth and perfourmeth grete werkes of goodnes that he hath begonne. And that is the ende why men sholde doo good werkes. For in the complpyshyng of good werkes lieth the grete guerdon. Thenne is the consiāre that is stablenes of corage. And this shold be in herte by stedfast feyth and in mouth and in berynge in chere and in dede. Like there ben no sperepal thyngys and remedies a penynt accorde in dyuerse werkes & in consyderacion of the peyne of helle and of the Joye of heuen. And in trust of the grace of the holy ghoost that wyl yeue hym myght to persure his entente.

Sequitur de Auaricia.

After Accorde nowe thys I
a speke of auarice and of couetyse of whiche synne said Saynt Poule. The rote of al synne is couetyse. For sothly whan the herte of a man is confounded in hit self and troublid & that they soule hath lost the comforte of god. Thenne seyth he an ydle solas of wordly thyn

ges. Auarice after descripsio of saint Austyn is a licherousnes in herte to haue erthely thynges. Somme other folke that auarice is for to purchas se many erthly thynges and nothing yeue to hem that haue nede. And vnderstonde well that auarice is not only in good and in catel. but som tyme in science and in gloire and in e uery outrageous thynges is auarice and couetyse And the differēce by twene auarice and couetyse is thys. Couetyse is for to coueyte suche thynges as thou hast not. And auarice is to wythholde and to kepe suche thynges as thou hast wythout ryghtfull nede. Sothly this auarice is a synne ful dampnable for al holy wyte cursyth it & spekyth ayenst it for hit doth wrong to Ihesu Cryst. For it bereuyth fro hym the loue that man to hym owen & turnyth it backward ayenst alle reason and makyth that the auarous man hathe more hope in his catel thenne in Ihesu cryst. And therefore sayth Saynt Poule. That an auarous man hath more hope in his thraldom of ydolatre than in god. What dyfferēce is betwix an ydolastre and an auaricious man. Peraventure an ydolastre hath but one mawment or two. And the auaricious man hath many. For certes euery floren in hys coffre is his mawment. And certes the synne of mawmentrye god forbiddeth in the ten cōmaundementis as beryth wytyes. Exo. xx cap. Thou

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shalt haue no fals goddis biforn me
 ne thou shalt make the no graupd
 thyng But an auaricious man lo-
 uyth more his tresour forgyd. And
 through this synne of auaryce & of co-
 uetyse comyth thysse hard lordshippis
 through whiche men bestreyned by ta-
 lagys customs and carpagys more
 than her dute or reson is. Dr ellys tas-
 ke they of her bond men amercemen-
 tis. whychse myght more resonably
 be callyd extorcionis than amerceme-
 tis. Of whiche amercementis and
 ransounyngys of bond men. Some
 melordys stywardys sayn that it is
 ritghful. for as mykel as a chorle
 hath no temporel thyng that it ne is
 hys lordys as they sayn. But certes
 thysse lordshyppis don wrong that be
 ryuen her bonde folke thynges that
 they neuer pay hem. Augustynus de
 ciuitate dei libro ij. Sayth that soth
 is that the condycion of thraldom &
 the first cause of thraldom is for sin-
 ne. Genesis ij. Thus may ye see h
 the gylte deserueth thraldom and not
 nature. wherefor thysse lordes shold
 not glōrye hem in her lordshyppys
 syth that by naturel condycyon they
 be not lordes of her thrallys. but that
 thraldom come first by synne. And
 fethermore there as the lawe sayth h
 temporel lordys of bonde folke ben
 the goodes of her lordshyppys ye that
 is for to vnderstoude the goodys off
 the emperour to defende hem in her
 right but not to robbe hem ne to re-
 ue hem. And therfore sayth Seneca

Thy prudence shold lyue benygncly
 wyth the thral. that thou clepest thy
 thral ben goddys peple. for humble
 folke ben crystes frendes. they be co-
 tubernal wyth the lord. Now co-
 myth discept betwene marchaunt &
 marchaunt And thou shalt vnder-
 stonde that marchaundyse is in ma-
 ny maners. That one is bodely and
 that other is ghoostly. that one is leef-
 ful and that other is dishoneste and
 vnleefful. That bodely marchayndy-
 se that is leefful & honest is this. that
 there as god hath ordeyned that a ro-
 yame or a contree is suffycient to hym
 self it is honest and leefful that the ha-
 boun daunce of this contree may hel-
 pe another contree that is more nede-
 ful.

And therfor ther must
 be marchaundyse to bynge from o-
 ne contree to another theyr marchau-
 ndyse That other marchaundyse is h
 men haunter fals othis wyth frau-
 de trecherye and dysceyte wyth lesyn-
 ges cursyd and dampnable Spyr-
 tuel marchauundyse is properly symo-
 ny. That is ententyf desyre to thing
 spyrituell That is thyng that apper-
 teyneth to the sentwary of god and
 to the cure of soule. This desyre yf so
 be that a man doo his dilygence to
 perfourme it. alle be it that his desy-
 re take none effect. yet is it to hym a
 dedely synne. And yf he be ordred he
 is Irregular. Certes symonye is cle-
 pyd of Symon magus that wolde
 by temporell catel haue bought the
 yeste that god had ryuen by the holy
 ghoost to seynt peter & to the apostellis

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And therfore vnderstonde ye that bo-
th he that sellyth and he that byeth
thynges sprituell ben clepyth symo-
nyaks. Be it catel be it procuryng
oz by flesshly prayers of his frendys
oz off spryтуelle frendes.

flesshly in two maners as by kyn-
rede and by other frendys. Sothly
yf they praye for hym that is not a-
ble ne worthy. it is symonye yf he ta-
ke the benefyce. And yf he be worthy
and able it is none. That other ma-
ner is whan men oz women prayen
for folke to auance hem only for
wpycked flesshly affection that they
haue to the persones. that is soul sy-
mony. But certes in seruyce for

whiche men yeven thynges sprituell
vnto her seru aumtyes it must be vnder-
stande that the seruyse be honest oz
ellys not. And eke that it be wyth-
out bargaynyng and that the perso-
ne be able. for as sayth Saynt Da-
mas. Alle the synnes of the world at
regard of this synne ben as thynges
of nought. for it is the gretest syn-
ne that may be after the synne of lu-
cifer. and of anticyrst. for by this
synne god forlesyth the churche & the
soule that he bought wyth his precy-
ous bloode by hem that yeven chy-
chis to them that be not dygne.

for they put in theiuyes that stelen the
sowlyps of Ihesu. Cryst and destroye
his patrymonye. By suche vndigne
preeftys and curates haue men the
lesse reuerence of the sacramentis off
holy churche. And suche yeuers of
chirches put out the chyldren of cryst

and put in 30 chirchys the deuyllys
owen childre. they sellen the sowlyps &
shalke kepe the lambyes to the wolf &
strongele hem. And therfore shal
they ueuer haue parte of the pasture
of lambyes that is in the blysse of he-
uen. Now comyth hasardrye wyth
his appertenauntys as tablyes. quar-
des. and reuellys. Of whiche cometh
dyscept fals othis. chydnyngs. and al-
le raueyns. blasphemynge. renyng
of god. hate of his neyghbours. wast
of goodys myspendnyng of tyme.

And somtyme manslaughter. Cer-
tes hasardours may not be wyth-
out grete synne whyles they haunten
that craft. Of auaryce comyth eke.
lesynge. theft. fals wytnes. and fals
othes. And ye shal vnderstande &
these ben grete synnes and expresse
ayenst the commaundements of god
as I haue sayde. fals wytnes is eke
in word and in dede. In worde as to
byrue thy neyghbours good name
by thy fals wytnessyng oz accusest
hym by thy fals wytnes. oz ellys ey-
cusest thy self falsely. ware ye quest-
mongers and notaryes. Certes for
fals wytnes was susanna in grete
forowe and peyn & many another
mo. The synne of theft is expresse al-
so ayenst goddys heest & that in two
maners. temporel & sprituell. The
temporel thefte is as for to take thy
neyghbours catel ayenst his wyl be
it be force oz by slyght be it in meting
oz mesure. by stelyng by fals endyte-
mentisg pon hym. & in borownyng

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thy neyghbours catel in entent neuer to paye and semblable thynges.

Spyrituel theste is sacrylege þis to saye outpnyng of holy thynges. or off thynges sacred to Cryst in two maners. by reson of the holy place. As churcheperdys for euery vpolent synne that men doo in suche place may be clepyd sacrylege. Also they that falsely wythholde the ryghtes of holy churche. and pleyne and generally sacrylege is to reue holy thyng out off holy place. or vnholy thyng out off holy place. or holy thyng out of vnholy place.

Now shal ye vnderstonde that reuelnyng of auarice is misericorde and pite largely taken. And men myght aye why that misericorde and pite in reuelnyng of auarice. Certes the auaricyons man shewed no pite ne misericorde to the nedefulman for he deliteth hym in keepnyng of this tresour. & not in the rescownyng ne in the releynyng of euen Crysten. And therefore speke I first of misericorde.

Than is myserycorde as saith the phylosophre a vertu by whiche corage of mā is styred by the mysese of hym þis is mysesed. vpon the wiche myserycorde wytr pite in persouymyng of charytable werkys of mercy helpeth and conforteth hym that is mysesed. And certes this meuyth men to the myserycorde of Ihesu criste that hym self suffryd for our gylt he suffred deth for myserycorde and forpaf vs our orygyenal synnes and therby relecyd fro the peyne of helle &

arenuyrd the peyn of purgatorye. The spyces of misericorde ben as for to lene and eke for to yeue. And for to foryeue and for to relece. and for to haue pite in herte and compassy on of myscheyf of thyng euen crysten. And eke chastyte there as nede is.

Another remedye apenst auarice is resonable larges. But sothly her be houeth the consyderacion of our lord Ihesu Cryst and of his grace and of his temporel goodys and eke off the goodys perdurable that crist yaf vs. And eke to haue remembraunce of the deth that he shal depe and receyue. And he woot not whan. And eke that he shal forgoon alle that he hath dyspendyd and gotten in goodys.

But for as moche as somme folke be vnumesurable. men oughten escheve we fool largesse þ men clepen waste.

Certe he that is fool large he yeueth pot his catel but he lesyth his catel. Certes what thyng that he yeueth for veynglorie as to minstrels and to folke that bere his renome in the world he hath doo synne and none almes. Certes he that lesyth fool his good and seketh no thyng but synne. He is lyke to an hors that seketh rather to drynke droppye water & troublly thā water of the clere welle. To hem apperteynen the malyson þ Cryste shal yeue atte day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

After auarice comyth glotonye. whiche is expresse a
 a penst the commaundement of god. Glotonye is vnumesurable
 appetyte to ete or to drynke. or ellys to ete vnumesurably & out of tyme
 more than nedeth is glotonye. This synne corruptid al this worlde as is
 wel shewyd in the synne of Adam & Eue. Lo eke what sayth saynt Pou
 le of glotonye. Many men sayth he of whiche I haue oft sayde you. and
 now I sape it wepyng that they be en
 nemyes of the crosse of cryst. Of whiche the ende is deth and of whiche her
 wombe is her god. and her glorie in confusion of hem that so setuyn er
 thely thynge. He that is vfaunt to this synne of glotonye. He may no
 synne wythstonde. He mote be in seruage of alle vyces for it is the deuyl
 lys horde there he hydeth hym in and restyd. This synne hath many spyces.
 The first is dronkenes. that is the horryble sepulture of manys reason. And therfore whan that a man
 is dronke he hath lost his reason and this is dedely synne. But certes whā a man
 is not wont to straunge drynke & perauerture knowyth not the strength of the
 drynke or hath feblenes in his hede or hath trauepylled thurgh whiche he
 drynketh the more. all be he sodenly caught with drynke it is no dedely
 synne but venyal. The second spyce of glotonye is. that the spiryte of a man
 wayyth alle trouble for dronkenes bereueth hym discre

cid of his wyll The third spyce of glotonye is whan a man deuoureth hys
 mete and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The fourth is whan thurgh
 the grete habundaunce of his mete. the humours of his body ben distem
 peryd The fyfthe is forgetefulnes by to moche drynkyng. For whiche a
 man forgetyth by the morowe what he dyd ouer Eue. In another maner
 ben distyncte the spyces of glotonye after saynt Gregore. The first is for
 to ete before tyme. The secōd is whā a man getyth hym to delycate mete
 The thyrd is whan a man taken to mykyl ouer mesure.

The fourth is curyosyte wyth grete entente to maken and apparaylle
 his mete. The fyfthe is for to ete greedly. And these ben the fyue spyngers
 of the deuyllys honde by whiche he drawyth folke to synne. Apenst glotonye
 is the remedye abstynence off his body and sayth Galylene. but þ
 holde I not merytorye yf he doo hit only for hele of hys body. Saynt
 Austyn wole þ abstynence be do by vertu and wyth pacience. Abstynence
 he saith is lytyl worth but yf he haue good wyll. & but he be enforaid by
 pacience & by charyte And þ men do it for goddys sake. & in hope to haue
 the blysse in heuen The felawes of abstynence ben attemperaunce that
 holdeth the mene in al thynge eke shame þ eschewyth al dyshoneste
 sifaure þ seeketh no riche metys ne drynkes ne doth no force off none
 outrageous apparaylyng of mete.

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Also that restreyneth by reason the delaupe apetyte of etyng and drynkyng. Sobrenes also that restreyneth the outrage of drynke. Sparryng also that restreyneth the dylcatese ease to spytte long at his mete. Wherfore somme folke stonden of her owhen wyfle whan they ete by cause they wyl ete at lasse leysur.

Sequitur de Luyuria.

After Glotenye thenne cometh a myghty lecherye. for thysse two synnyngs ben so nygh cosyns that oft tyme they wyl not departe. God woot this synne is full dyspleysant to god. for he sayde hym selff doo no lecherye. And therfore he putteth gret peynes apenst this synne. For in thold lawe if a woman thral were taken in this synne she shold be betyn wyth stauys to the deth. And yf she were a gentyl woman she shold be slayn wyth stones. And yf she were a bysshoppys daughter she shold be brent by goddys commandement. Furthermore for the synne of lecherye god dreynit alle the world. And after that he brent synners clytes and sanked down in to helle. Now lete vs speke thenne of the synne of lecherye þ men clepen aduoultre that is of weddyd folke that is to saye yf that one of hem ben weddyd or ellys bothe. Saynt Johan sayth þ thauowtters shulle be in a styngyng brennyng

pytte of fyre and brennyng for lecherye is lykned to brennstone for the styng of her ordure. Certes the bereyng and brekkyng of thys Sacrament is an honnyble thyng. Hit was made of god hym self in paradysse & confermed by Ihesu Cryste.

As sayth Saynt Mathew in the gospel A man shall ete fader and moder and take hym to hys wyf. And they shal be two in one flesshe. This sacrament betokeneth the kuytting to gyder of Cryste & holy chirche. & not only that god forbad auowtry in dede. But eke he commaunded þ thou sholdest not couepte thy neryghbours wyf. In this heest saith saint Austyn Almaner couetyse to doo lecherye is forboden. Lo what sayth Saynt Mathew in the gospel who so seeth a woman to couetyse of his lust. he hath don lechery wyth her in his herte. Here may ye se þ not only the dede of this synne is forbode. but eke the desyre to do þ synne. This curtyd synne anoyeth greuoussly hem that it haunte & first to the soule. For he obligeth it to synne & to peyne of deth þ is perdurable. & to the body anoyeth it greuoussly. For it dryeth hym. And of his blood he makyth sacrafyse to the fende of helle. hit wastyth his catel and his substaunce. & certes yf hit be a foul thing a man to waste hys catel on women. yet is it a fouler thing þ whan for suche ordure women spenden vpon men her catell & substance. This synne as sayth the

By myl Rogers
Spencer

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propheete bereueth a man & a womā
her good fame and alle her honoure
And it is ful playfaunt to the deuyl
For ther by Wynneth he the most par
ty of this world. And right as a
marchaunt delyteth hym moost in
chaffare that he hath most awaunta
ge of. Ryght so delyteth the fende in
this ordure. This is that other hand
of the deuyl wyth spue fingres to cat
che the peple to this vilonie The first
fynger is the foule lo kyng of the fol
woman that sleth right as the basily
cock sleeth folke by the benyn of his
lyght. For couetyse of the eyen folo
weth the couetyse of the herte. The
second fynger is the vylayns tou
chyng in wycked maner. And ther
fore sayth Salamon. That who so
touchyth and handelyth a woman.

He faryth lyke hym that handeleth
the scorpyon that styngeth and so
deuily sleth thurgh his enuynmyng
or as who so touchyth pitche he shen
deth his fyngrys. The thirde is foule
wordes that faryth lyke fyre þ bren
nyth that right anon brennyth the
herte. The fourth is kyssyng. & trew
ly he were a grete foole þ wold kisse
the mouth of a brennyng ouyn or of
a furneyns And more foolis ben they
that kyssen in Byloune for þ mouth
is the mouth of helle.

And namely thysse olde do
tardys holours yet wyl they kyss
though they may not do and smater
hem Certes they be lyke to houndys
For an hound whan he comyth by
the Roser or by other benchys yf he

may not pisse yet wyl he heue by his
legge and make contenaunce to pisse

And for that man wenyth that he
may not synne for lichorousnes that
he doth wyth his wyf. Certes that
opnyon is fals Good woot a man
may sle him self with his owen knif
and make hym dronk wyth his o
wen tonne. Certes be it wyf or chyld
or worldy thyng that he louyd be
fore god it is his mawment. and he
is an ydolastre. man shold loue his
wyf by dyscrecion patiently and at
temperatly. & than is she as though
she were his suster. The fyfthe fyn
ger of the deuyls honde is the styri
kyng dede of lecherie. He gryppeth
hym by the reynes for to throwe him
in to the furneyns of helle. there as
they shal haue the fyre and the wor
mys that euer shal lastyn. wepyng
& walynge. sharpe hunger and thirst
Gripynges of deuyls that shul alie
to trede hym wythout respite & wyth
outen ende. Of lecherie as I sayd
sourcen dyuerse spyes as fornyca
cion þ is betwix man and woman
that ben not marped & this is dedely
synne & apenst nature & distrustid to
nature is apenst nature. Persey the re
son tellyth hym eke that it is dedely
synne for as moche as god forbad le
cherie. & saint Poule yeueth him the
regne þ is due to no wyght. but to
hem þ dono dedely synne. another syn
of lecherie is to bereuen a mayde off
her maydenshede. for certes he þ so dot
he catchid a mayde out of the hiest de
gre þ is in this present lyf. & bereueth

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her that precious fruyt that the bok
clepeth the hondred fruyt. I can saye
it none other wyse in Englyssh. but
in latyn it hyght centesimus fructus

Certes he that so doth is cause of
many dommages & vyloneys moo
than ony man can reken. Ryght
as he somtyme is cause of alle dom-
magys that bestys doo in the felde he
breketh the hedg of the colfute thru
ghe whiche he dystroyeth he may not
be restorpd. for certes nomore may
maydenhede be restored. than an ar-
me that is smyten fro the body may
retorne apen to wepe. She may ha-
ue mercy this woot I wel. yf she do
penytence. but neuer shal it be. but he
she is corrupt. And al be it so that I
haue spoke somewhat of auoultrye
it is good to shewe mo perylls that
longen to auoultrye for to eschewe
the foule synns of aduoultrye. In
latyn it for to saye thapprochyng of
another manys bed. through which
they that were one flessh habounden
her bodes to other persones. Of
this synne as sayth the wyse man co-
me many harmys. first brekynge off
seyth. & certes seyth is keye of cryste-
dome. And whan that keye is bro-
ken & lorn certeyn crystendom stan-
deth wythout fruyt. This synne is
eke theft for theste generally to spe-
ke of. is for to reue a thyng of a mā
apenst his wyl. Certes this is the
foulest theste that may be whan a
woman steleth her body from her
husbond & peucth it to her holour to

defoule it. and steleth her soule from
cryst and peucth hit to the deuyl.

This is a foule theft for to stele and
breke the chalis. for thys aduoul-
tris breken the temple of god spen-
tuelly and stelen the vessel of grace.
That is the body and the soule. for
whiche Cryst shalle destroye hem as
sayth saynt Poule. Sothly of this
theste doubtyd gretely Joseph. whan
that his lordes wyf prayed hym off
vylonye whan he sayde. Lo my lady
how my lorde hath take to me un-
der my warde all that he hath vnder
this worlde. Ne no thyng is out of
my power but only ye he be hys wyf

And how shold I thenne doo this
wyckednes and synne soo horryble
apenst god. Alas al to sptyl is suche
trouthe now I fynde. The thyrd
harme is. the splite through whiche
they breke the commaundement off
god and defoule the auter of her ma-
trymony that is Cryst. for certes
in so mykyl as the sacramēt of mar-
ryage is so noble and so dygne soo
moche it is the gretter synne to bre-
ke it. for god made marryage in pa-
radyse in the state of Innocencye to
multeplie mākinde to the seruce of
god. & therfore is the brekynge therof
gretous. Of whiche brekynge come
fals heyres. often tyme he wrongfully
occuppen folkes herptages. & therfo-
re wyl crist put hem out of the regne
of heuen that is herptage to good fol-
ke. Of this brekynge comyth
eke that folke vnder waat wedde. Di-

in hylnd May

spinne wyth her owen kyngrede. And namely the herlottis that haunten bordellys. Thyse fool women mowe be lykened to a comyn gonge where as men purge her ordure. What saye we eke of putriers that lyuen by the horryble spinne of putrye. and constreyn women. yf somune her owen wyuys or his chyldre as don thys bad wys to yelde hem a certeyn rente of her bodely putrye. Certes thys ben cursyd synners. Vnderstonde ye eke that aduoultrye is sette compulys in the ten commaundementis betwene theft and manslaugther. For it is the grettest thefte that may be. For it is thefte of body and of soule And it is lyke to homycyde. For it keruyth a two hem that first were made one flessh. And by the olde lawe they shold be slayn. But neuertheles by the lawe of Ihesu cryst that is the lawe of pyte. whan he sayd to the woman that was founde in auoutrye. and shold haue be slayn wyth stones after the wyll of the Jewys as was her lawe. Goo quod Ihesu cryst and haue no more wyll to doo spinne.

Sothly Vengeaunce of aduoultrye is awarded to the peyne of helle.

But it be dystourbyd wyth penaunce yet ben there mo spyces of this cursyd spinne as whan that one of them is relygyous or ellys bothe. or of folke that ben entrid in to ordre as subdekyng. or dekyng. prest or hospitalers And euer the hyper that he is in ordre the gretter is the spinne. For they haue made grete do wys to kepe chasty

te. This spinne of brekyng off hys auowe of chastyte is whan he receyued ordre. And soth it is that holy order is chye of alle the tresour of god and is a special sygne and marke of chastyte which that is the moost precyous lyf that is. And eke this ordered folke ben specially tilled to god for whiche whan they doo dedely synne. they ben the special traptours off god and of his peple. For they lyue by the peple to praye for the peple.

And whyles they be suche traptours her prayers auayle not to the people Preefys ben as aungellys as by the mystery of her dygnyte. But forsoth Saynt Poule sayth that sathane's transfourmeth hym in an aungel of lyght. Sothly the preest that hauntyth spinne he may be lykened to an aungel of derknes transfourmed in to an aungel of lyght. He semeth an aungel of lyght. But forsoth he is an aungel of derknes. Suche preestis ben the sone of hely as is shewed in the booke of kynges that they were the sonys of belyal. that is the desuyll. Belyal is to saye wytheuten Juge. And so faren they. hem thynketh that they be free and haue noo Juge nomore than hath a free boile that takyth whycherowet that hym lyketh in the toun. So faren they by women.

For right as a free boile is ynough for alle a toun.

Ryght so is a corrupte Preefynough for alle a parisshe or a countre. Thys preestis as sayth the booke know not the mynistry of preesthod

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to the people ne to god ne they holde hem not apayed as sayth the booke of soden flessh that was to hem of fryd. but they take by force the flessh that is rawe. Certes right so thye shrewys holde hem not a payed off rosted flessh and soden wyth whiche the peple seden hem in grete reuerence. But they wyl haue rawe fleshe as folkys wyuys and her doughsters. And certes theyse women that consentyng to her harlotys do grete wrong to cryste and to holy chyrche to alle halowys and to alle sowlys. For they bereuen hem alle that shold worshyp cryst and holy chyrche And also to prayen for alle crysten soulis And therfore haue suche prestys and her lemmans that consentyng to her lecherie the malyson of the crysten court tyl they come to amendement. The thirde spyce of aduoultre is somtyme betwyp a nan and his wyf. And that is whan they take noo regard in theyr assembleng but only for flesshly delyte as sayth saynt Jerome and recke of nothyng but they be assemblyd by cause they be maryed. Al is good y enough as thynketh to hem. But in suche folke hath the deuyll power as sayde the aungel Raphael to Tobye. For in her assemblyng they put Ihesu Cryste out off her herte. and yeue hem self to al omdure The fourth spyce is of hem þ assembleng by her kynrede or of hem þ ben of one affynyte. Or ellys wyth hem wyth whom her faders had delyd wyth the synne of lecherie. This

synne makyth hem lyke houndes þ taken none hede of kynrede. And certes parentela is in two maners. or ghoostly. flesshly. ghoostly is for to delyn wyth her gossyds. for right so as a godfader is her fader spyrtuel. for whiche a woman may in no lesse synne semble wyth her gossyb than wyth her owen broder The fyfthe synne is þ abhomynable synne of whiche no man ought to speke of ne wyte. neuertheles it is openly reherfed in holy wryt. Certes holy wryt may not be defouled moze than the sonne that shyneth on a donshyll. Another synne apperteyneth to lecherie that cometh in slepyng. And this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydens and eke to hem that ben corrupt. And this synne is cleped polucyon. That cometh in foure maners. Somtyme it cometh of languysshynge of the body of man. Somtyme it cometh of Infirmyte for the feblenes of the vertue retentif as phisik makyth mencyon. Somtyme of surfete of mete and drynke. And somtyme for dyolente thoughtis þ ben enclosed in mānys mynde whā he goth to slepe. whiche may not be wyth out synne for whiche men kepe hem wysely. or ellys may they synne greuouusly. Now cometh remedye ayeust lecherie. & þ is generally chastyte & contynēce that refreyneth al dysordynate meuyngys þ comyn of flesshly talentys. And euer the gretter mercyte shalle he haue that refreyneth most the wycked chuffing

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or ordure of this synne. And this is
 in two maners. that is to save chaf-
 tye of maryage and chastyte of wy-
 do whede. Now shalt thou vndersto-
 de that matromonye is lesful assem-
 blyng of man and woman that res-
 ceuyn the vertue of the sacrament.
 The bonde whiche that may not be
 departyd in al her lyf. thys is to saie
 whyles they lyue bothe This is as
 sayth the booke a ful grete sacrament
 God made it us I haue sayd in pa-
 radyse and wold hym self be born in
 maryage. And for to halo we marya-
 ge he was atte weddyng where he
 tourned water in to wyne. whiche
 was the first myracle þe he wrought
 in erthe to fore his dysciples. The tre
 we effect of maryage clenysyth fouly-
 carny and replenyssheth holy chyrc-
 che of good lyngage. for as the ende
 of maryage chaungyth dedely synne
 in to venyal bytwene hem that been
 weddyd & ma kyth the hertes al one
 as wel of hem as the bodyes. This
 is very maryage that is stablysshed
 by god or that yune began whan
 naturall lawe was in his right point
 in paradys And it was ordeped þe a
 woman shold haue but one man. as
 sayth saynt Anstyn by many resons
 fyrst that maryage is fygured be-
 twene cryst and holy chirche. And
 another is that a man is hede of the
 womā aleg ite by ordenaūce it shold
 be also for yf a woman had mo me
 than one. thenne shold he haue moo
 hedres than one. And that wite an

horryble thynges before god. And
 eke a woman myght not please ma-
 ny folke attones. And also there
 shold neuer be pees ne rest amonge
 hem for euerich wold aske his owen
 thyng. And forther more noman
 shold knawe his owen engendrure
 ne who shold haue his crytage. And
 the woman shold be lasse louyd fro
 the tyme þe she were commypt wyth
 many. Now comyth how a man
 shold bere hym wyth his wyff and
 namely in two thyngys þe is to saie i
 suffraūce & in reuerēce & this shewyd
 fyrst Cryst whan he fyrst woman.
 For he made her not of Adams heed.
 For she shold not haue to grete lord-
 shyp for there as the woman hath
 the masterye she makith to moche dis-
 aray. There nede none ensaumplys
 of this. Theyperpence that we haue
 day by day ought to suffice. Also cer-
 tes ne he made not the woman of the
 feet of Adam. For she shold not bee
 holde to lowe for he can not pacient-
 ly suffre But god made woman off
 the Ryb of Adam. for woman
 shold be folowe vnto man. Man
 shold bere hym to hys wyf. in fayth.
 i trouth & in loue As saith saint poule
 and that men shold loue his wyf as
 cryst dyd holy chirche that louyd it so
 wel þe he deyed for it. So shold a mā
 for his wyf yf it were nede. Now
 how þe a woman sholde be subget to
 her husbond þe telleth Saint Peter &
 eke as sayth the decre. A woman as
 long as she is a wyf. she hath none

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auctorite to swere ne to bere wytnes wythout leue of her husbond. And also she shold be honest and attemptat of aray. I wote wel that they shol sette her entent to plesse her husbond. But not by queyntise of her aray. Saynt Iherome sayth that wyuys ben aparaylled in sylke and in putpurre, may not clothen hem in ihu cryst. Saynt Gregore sayth eke þat no wyght seketh no precious araye but only beyng glorie to be honoured the more befor the peple. it is grete folye a woman to haue grete araye outward & her self to be foul inward. A wyf shuld eke be mesurable, in lakynge, in beyng and in lawshynge & dyscrete in al her wordes and her dedes. And aboue all worldly thynges she shold haue her husbond wyth all her herte and to hym be trewe of her body. So shold euery husbond eke be trewe to his wyf. For sythen alle the body is the husbondes so shold her herte be also. or ellys there is betwix hem two no parfayth marriage as in that. Than shalle a man vnderstonde that for thre thynges a mā and his wyf moue assemble. The first for the entent of gendrure of chyl dren to the seruyse of god. For certes that is the cause fynal of matrymony. That other is to yelde eueryche of hem the dette of her body: for nether of hem hath power of his owen body. The third is for the schewe lecherye and vylonye. The fourth forsoth is dedely synne. As to the first it is

mercyforpe. The second also for the decre sayth she hath mercy for þat she yeldyth to her husbond the dette of her body. ye though it be ayenst her lykynge and the lust of her herte. The thurd maner whiche is tescche we lecherye. I holde it no dedely synne. But many of thysse be not wythout venyal synne for the corruption and delyte therof. The fourth maner is to vnderstonde yf that they assemble only for amerouse loue and for none of the forsayd causys but for taccomplyssh the biennynge delyte they recke neuer how ofte. Sothly it is a dedely synne. And yet wyth sorowe somme folke wyl peyne hem more to do than her appetit suffyseth. The second maner of chastyte is to be clene wydowe to eschewe the brasynge of man and to desyre them brasynge of Ihesu Cryst. Thysse ben tho that haue ben wyuys and haue forgoon her husbondes. And eke woman that haue doon lecherye. And be releuyd by penaunce. And certes yf that a wif can kepe her alle chaste by lycence of her husbond. so þat she gaf no cause ner none occasyon that he agylted, thyt were to her grete mercy. These maner of women þat obseruen chastyte must be clene in herte as wel as in body and in thought and mesurable in clothynge and in contenance as stymently etyng and in drynkynge. In spekyng and in dede. And thenne is she vessel of the bope of the blessed Maudeleyn that fulfyllle holy churche

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ful of good odour. The thyrde man-
ner of chastyte is Virgynpte.

And it behoupyth that she be holy in
herte and clene of body. Thenne is
she the spouse to Ihesu Cryste. And
she is the lyp of aungellys. She is the
preyspng of this world and she is as
thysse martire in Regalye. She hath
in her that tunge may not telle.

Dyrgynpte bare our lord Ihu Crist
And Virgynpte was hym self. Ano-
ther remedye apenst lecherye is specy-
ally to wythdrawe suche thynges as
peyn occasion to that bylonye as
etyng and drynkynge. For certes
whan the pot boyleth strongly. The
best remedye is to wythdrawe the fy-
re. Slepynge long in grete quete is
eke a grete norpce to lecherye. Ano-
ther remedye apenst lecherye is that
a woman or man eschew compaigne
of hem by whiche he demeth to be
temptyd for alle be it so that the dede
be wythstonde yet is there grete temp-
tacion. Sothly a whyte wal al thou-
gh it biene not fully by the stynging
of a candel. yet is the wal black off
the lpyght. In lyke wyse ofte tymes
suche persones haue euyl name by
cause they drawe in vicious compa-
nye. Welofte tyme haue I redde that
no man trust in his owey perfection
but he be stronger than Samson.

Holper than Dauid. Wyser than
Salamon. Now after as I haue de-
clared yow as I can of the vii. dedes
ly synnes and somme of her braun-
ches and he remedyes. Sothly yf I

coude I wold telle you the ten com-
maundementis. but so hygh a doc-
tryne I lete to dyuynes. But neuer-
theles I trust to god they be touched
in this trefse euertiche of hem alle.

Ad huc secunda pars penitencie.

Now as to the second par-
te of penytence stont in co-
fession of mouth as I be-
gan in the second chapytte to fore.

Saynt Austyn sayth synne is in e-
uery worde and in euery dede. And
alle that men coueten apenst the la-
we of Ihesu Cryst And this is for to
synne in herte in mouth and in dede
by the fyue wyttys. that ben syght.
heeryng smellynge. tastynge or sau-
ryng and felyng. Now is it good to
vnderstonde the circumstauncis that
agrudgen mykyl euery synne.

Thou shalt consydere what thou art
that dost the synne. wheter thou be
male or female. yong or olde. gentyl
or thral. fre or seruaunt. wyse or fool.
hool or syke. wedded or single. ordred
or vordred. clerck or seculer. yf
she be of the kyntede bodyly or ghoo-
stly or none. a mayden or none. in
maner of homicide or none. horryble
grete synne or smal. and how longe
thou hast contynued in synne.

The thyrde Circumstaunce is the pla-
ce where thou hast don synne. whe-
ther in other manys howsis or in
thy own. In felde or in chirche or
in chyrrerde. In chirche dedycate or

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non. for yf the chyrche were halowed and man or woman spylle hys kynde wythin that place by wey of synne or by wickked temptation the chyrche were enterdyted tyl it were reconciled by the bysshop: And the preeft sholde be enterdyted that dyde suche bylonye. terme of his lyf and heshold nomore spunge masse. and yf he dyde he shold doo dedely synne atte cuery tyme that he song masse. The fourth circumstance is by suche medytours as by messangers or for entysement or for cōsentement to bere cōpaupe wyth felawshyp. for many one for to bere felawshyp wyl go to the decayl of helle. for they that eggyng or consentyn to the synne ben parteners to the synne and of the dampnation of the synnar. The fyfthe is how many tymes that he hath synned and it be in his mynde. and how oft he hath falle. for he that ofte fallyth in synne he despyseth the mercy of god and encrepyth his synne. And is vnkynde to god And he weyeth the more feble to wythstonde synne. And synneth the more lyghtly. And the later aryseth. and the more escheweth for to shryue hym. And namely to hym that hath ben his cōfessour for whiche that folke whan they falle ayen in her olde solyes they foieten her olde confessours al sterly. Or ellys they departen her shryfte in dyuerse places. But sothly suche departyd shryfte deseruyth no mercy of god for his synnes. The syxte

circumstaunce is this why þ a man synneth. as by what temptation. And of hym self procure thylk temptation. or by exceptyng of other folk or yf thou synne wyth a woman by force or by her owen assent. Or yf a waman magre her heed haue be enforced or not. and whether for couetyse or pouerte. All this shalt thou telle: and yf it was her procuryng or no and alle suche maner thynges. The seventh circumstance is in what maner he hath doon his synne. or how þ she hath suffryd how folke haue don to her. and of the same shalle the mā telle alle the circumstauncis. And yf that he haue synned wyth company bordel women or none. in fastyng tymes or none. or doon his synne in holy tymes or none. or beforn hys shryft. or after hys latter shryfte and hath pauētur therfor broke his penaunce enioyned. bi whos help and whos counceyl. by sorcery or craft. al must betolde thyse thynges after that they be grete or smale and grudge the conscience of man or woman. And eke the preeft that is the Iuge may the better be auyssyd of hys Iugement. In peuyng hys penaunce. and that shal be after his contrycion. for vnderstonde wel that after tyme þ a man hath defouled hys baptyfme by synne. yf he wyl come to sauaciō there is none other weye but penaunce and shryft and satysfaction. And namely by the two. yf there be a confessour to whom he may shryue hym

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And that he first be very contrite and repentaunte And the thyrd yf he haue lye to perfourme it. Thenne shalle man loke and consydere yf he wyl make a true and a proffitable confessyon. there must be foure condicions. first it must be in sorowful bitternesse of herte as sayd the kynge Ezechye to god I wyl remembre all the peccys of my syf in the bytternesse of my herte. This condycion of bytternes hath fyue spynes. The first is that confessyon must be shamefaste not for to couerpe ne to hyde his synne But for he hath agylted his god & defouled his soule. And herof sayth Saynt Austyn. The herte traueileth for shame of hys synne. And for he hath grete shamefastnes. he is digne to haue grete mercy. whiche was the confession of the puplycane þe wolde not leste by his eyen to heuen. for he offendyd god of heuen. for whiche shamefastnes he had lost anoone the mercy of god. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. That suche shamefast folke ben next forpouenes & remyssyon. That other synne is humylyte of confessyon of whiche sayth saynt peter humblyeth you vnder the myghty honde of god in confessyon for therby god forpoueth the synnes for he allone hath power. This humylyte shal be in herte and in spyne outward. For ryght as he hath humylyte to god in his herte Right soo shold he humble his bodi outward to the preest that spytteyth in goddes place for whiche in no maner. spytthys þe

cryste is souereyn and the preest mane and medyatour byt wene cryste & the synnar. And the synnar is lesse by weye of reson. Than shold not the synnar spytte as hygh as his confessor. but knele byforn hym or at his feet but yf maladye destourbe it. for he shal not take kepe who spytte there but in whos place he spytteyth. A man that hath trespaced to a lord and comyth for to aye mercy & make his accomde and sette hym down anon by the lord. Wen wold holde hym outrageous and not worthy sone to haue remyssyon ne mercy.

The thyrd spyne is that the shryfte shold be foul of teris yf man may wepe. And yf a man may not wepe wyth his bodely eyen lete hym wepe in his herte. Suche was the confessyon of Saynt Peter.

for after he had forsake Ihesu Criste he went out and wepte ful bitterly

The fourth spyne is that he lete not for shame to shryue hym and she we hym hys confessyon. Suche was the confessyon of Dawdelene. that spared for noo shame of hem that were at the feste. for to goo to Our Lord Ihesu Criste and be knowe to hym her synne.

The fyfte spyne is that man and woman be obeysaunt to receyue the penaunce that is enioyned hem.

for certes Ihesu Criste for the gyfte of one mā was obeyent to the deith The second condycion of very confessyon is that it be hastely doon.

for certes yf a man had a dedely

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wounde euer the lenger þ he tarped to warpyſſhe hym. the more wolde hit corupte and haſte hym to hys deſth.

And eke the wounde be the worſe for to hele. Ryght ſo ſarpyth ſynne that longe tyme is in a man ynſhewed. Certes a man ought haſtely to ſhewe his ſynne for many cauſes. And for drede of deſth that cometh oft tyme ſo ſodenly and is in no certeyn what tyme it ſhal be ne in what place And eke the lenger he tarpyth the ferther is he fro Cryſt. And yf he abyede vnto his laſt dape. ſcarcely may he ſhryue or amende hym for hys ſynnes or repete hym for the greuous maladye of his deſth. And for as moche as he hath not his lyf herkenyd Iheſu Cryſte whan he hath ſpoken vnto hym. he ſhal crye vnto our Lord at his laſt day and ſcarcely he ſhal herken hym vnderſtonde þ his condycion muſt haue foure thynges firſt that thy ſhryfte be purueyed a fore and auyſed. And that a man can ſhryue hym of hys ſynnes be it of pryde or of enuye ⁊ ſoo forth wyth the ſpyces and circumſtairncis And that he haue comprehendyd in his mynde the nombre and the gretenes of his ſynnes and how longe he hath leyen in ſynne and eke that he be contryte of his ſynnes and be in ſtedfaſt purpoos by the grace of god neuer eſte to falle ayen in to ſynne to whyche he is enclpyed Alſo thou ſhal ſhryue the of alle thy ſynnes to one man ⁊ not parcelmele to one man ⁊

parcelmele to another. Than is it to be vnderſtonde in thentent to patten thy confeſſyon as for ſhame or drede for it nys but ſtranglyng in the ſoule. For certes Iheſu Cryſt is al good in hym is none Imperfection: And therfore he forgetteth al parſyghtly. and ellys neuer a deſt. I ſaye not yf thou be aſſyned to the penetauncer for certeyn ſynne that thou art bounde to ſhewe hym al the remenaunt of thy ſynnes of whiche thou haſt be ſhryuen of thy curate but yf it lyketh of thy humylyte. this is no deſpartynge of ſhryfte. ne I ſay not there as I ſpeke of deuyſyon of confeſſyō that yf thou haue lycence to ſhryue the to a discrete ⁊ an honeſt preeſt ⁊ where the lyketh. and by the lycence of thy curate. þ thou ne mayſt well ſhryue the of al thy ſynnes. but leet no blot behynde. lete no ſynne be vntolde as ſer as thou haſt remebraunce. And whan thou ſhalt be ſhryuen of thy curate. telle hym eke al the ſynnes that thou haſt don ſyth thou were laſt ſhryuen. Alſo the very ſhryfte aſketh certeyn condycions. Firſt thou ſhalt ſhryue the by thy free wyll not conſtyned ne for ſhame of folke ne for maladye or ſuche thynges. for it is reſon þ he that treſpareth by hys free wyll confeſſe his treſpaas. ne no other man ſhal telle hys ſynne. ne wrath hym ayenſt the preeſt for hys amoneſſhyng to lete hys ſynne. The ſecond condycion is that thy ſhryfte be lawful. þ is to ſay. thou þ ſhryueſt

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the. & eke the preest that heyrth thy confessyon ben derely in the seyth of holy churche. and that a man be not despeyred of the mercy of Ihesu Cryst as Cayn and Judas were. And eke a man must accuse hym self of hys owen trespaas & not another. But he shal blame and wyte hym self off of his owen malice and of his synne and none other. But neuertheles yff another man by encheson of entysyng of his synnes. or yf the estate of a persone be suche by whiche his synne is agreed yd or ellys that he may not pleyntly shryue but he telke the persone whiche hath synned wyth. thenne may he telke. So that his entente be not to bacbyte the persone. but only to declare hys confessyon. Thou shalt eke make no lesyng in thy confessyon for humyltyte. Peraventure to saye that thou hast doon synnes of whiche thou were neuer gilty. For saynt Austyn sayth. yf thou by cause of humyltyte makyest a lesyng of thy self though thou were not in synne afore. yet art thou in synne thenne through thy lesyng. Thou shalt eke shewe thy synne by thy propre mouth byt thou be dombe. And not by letter. for thou that hast do synne thou shalt haue the shame of thy confessyon. Thou shalt not eke peynte thy confessyon by fayre & subtil wordes to couere the more thy synne. for thenne begylest thou thy self. and not the preest. thou must telke it pleyntly be it neuer so honyble ne

so foul. Thou shalt eke shryue the to a preest that is discrete to counceyl the. And eke thou shalt not shryue the for veyn gloryene for ypoctrysyne for no cause but only for the doute of Ihu Cryst & the hele of thy soule. Thou shalt not eke renne to the preest al sodenly to telke hym lyghtly thy synne as who tellyth a iape or a tale but auysedly wyth grete deuocyon and generall to shryue the ofter than onys of synne whiche thou hast be shreuen of. it is the more mercy. For as sayth saynt Austyn. Thou shalt haue the more lyghtly relere & grace of god. both of synne and off peyne. And certes onys a yere at the lest weye it is lawfull for to be houselyd. for sothly ones a yere al thynge renouelyn.

Incipit tertia pars penitencie.

¶ We haue I tolde of veyn confessyon þis the seconde part of penitence. The thirde parte is satisfaccion. And stondeth generally in almes dede and in bodely payn. Now ben there thre maner of almesse contricion of herte where a man offryth hym self to god. Another is to haue pyle of defaute of his neyghbours. The thirde is in yeuing of good counceyl and comferte bodely and ghostely where men haue nede & namely in substaunce of manys food. And take kepe þa man hath nede of these thyngs generally he

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hath nede of food of clothyng and herberow. he hath nede of charitable counceyling and dyspyng in pryson. a maladye and sepulture off dede bodys. And yf thou mayst not vpsyte the nedeful wyth thy persone. Visite hym with thy message and thy yestes. These ben the general aimes of werkyng of charite of hem that haue temporel riches or discrecion in couceyling. Of these werkes shalt thou here at the dape of dome thys abnesse sholdest thou doo of thy propre thynges and hastely and pryuelly yf thou mayst. But neuertheless if thou mayst not doo it pryuelly thou shalt not forbere to do aimes though men see it. so that it be not do for thāke of the world. but only for to haue thanke of our lord Ihesu Cryste. For as wytnessyth Saynt Mathew A cyte may not be hyd that is sette vpon a mounteyn. Ne men lyght not a lantern and put it vnder a bussel but sytten it vpon a candelstpycke to lyghten the men in the hous. Right so shal your lyght. lyghten before men that they mo we see your good werkyngs and gloryfye your fader that is in heuen. Now as for to speke of bodily peyn it stond in prayere. in walkyng. in fastyng and in vertuous techyng of oryson. ye shal vnderstonde that oryson or prayere is for to saye. Appetous Boys of herte that is redressyd in god and expyessing it be worde ourwarde to仁cure harmful thynges and to haue thynges sprituell and durable and somtyme

temporel thynges. Of whiche oryson. in the oryson of Pater noster hath Ihesu crist endospyth most thynges. Certes it is pryuyleged of thre thynges in his dignyte. for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer for that Ihu cryst hym self made hit and it is short. for it sholde be coude the more lyghtly. and for to wythholde more esely in herte. and helpe hym self the oster wyth the oryson. And for a man shold be the lesse wery to saye it. and for a man may not excuse hym to lerne it. it is so shorte and so esy. And for it comprehendith in hym self alle good prayers The ypposicion of this holy prayer that is so excellent and so digne I betake to the maysters off theologie. Saue thus moche wyll I saye. That whan thou prayest that god sholde foryeue the thy gyftes as thou foryeuest hem that haue agylted the. Be wel ware þ thou be not out of charite This holy oryson amemusyth eke veynal synne. And therefore it apperteyneth specially to penytence. This prayer must be truly sayd in very feyth. and that men praye to god ordynatly. discretely. and deuoutly. Alle way a man shal put his wyll to be subiect to the wyll of god this oryson must eke be sayde wyth grete humblenes and ful pure and honestly. and not to the annoyauce of ony mā or woman hit muste eke be contynued wyth werkis of charyte. it away. lath eke ayenst the vyces of the soule
for as sayth Saynt Iherome.

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By fastyng be sayrd the Byres of the flessh .and by prayers the Byres off the soule. After this thou shalt vnderstonde that bodely peyn stont in walkyng. For Ihesu Cryst sayth wake ye and prape ye that ye ne entre in to wycked temptation. ye shal vnderstonde that fastyng standeth in thre chynges. in forbering of bodely mete and drinke. and in forbering of worldly Iolytees. And in forbering of dedely synne wyth alle hys myght. And thou shalt vnderstonde that god ordeyned fastyng. & to fastyng apperteyneth four chynges. largenes to poure folke. gladnes in herte spirituel not be angryd ne to be annoyed ne to grutchen for he fasteth.

And also resonable hour for to ete by mesure þ is to say þ a man shold not ete in vntyme ne sytte the lenger at his table for he fasteth. Thine shalt thou vnderstonde that bodely peyn stontyth in discyplne or techyng by wrytyng. or by ensauple. Also in weryng of hyper or of stamyn. or of an habergeon on her naked flesshe for Crystis sake. and that suche maner penauncis ne make not thy herte bytter or angry ne annoyed of thyself. for better is to cast away thy heyre than to cast away the sweteness of our lord Ihesu Cryst. And therefore sayth saynt Poule. Clothe you as they that ben chosen of god in herte. Of myserycorde. debonaeryte. suffraunce and suche maner of clothysyng. In whiche Ihesu Cryste is more apayed than in an heyr or ha-

bergeon. Than is discyplne eke in knockyng of thy brest in scourging wyth perdisyn knylyng. in tribulacions. in suffryng paciently wronges þ be do to him & eke in paciet suffryng of maladyes. or lesynges. or worldly catel. or wyf. or chylde. or other frendys. Thenne shalt thou vnderstonde whiche chynges destourben penaunce. And this is in thre maners that is drede. shame. and warshope that is desperacion. And for to speke of drede. for whiche he weneth he may suffre no penaunce. there apenst is remedye for to thynke that bodely penaunce is but short atte regarde of helle that is cruel and soo longe that it lastyth wythouten ende. Now apenst shame that a mā hath to shryue him. Shold a man thynke by waye of reason. That he hath not be aschamed to doo foule thyng. Certes hym ought not to be aschamed to doo feir thyngs and good thynges. And that is confessyons. A man shold thynke that god woot alle hys thoughtis and hys werkes and to hym mayenethyng be hyd ne coueryd.

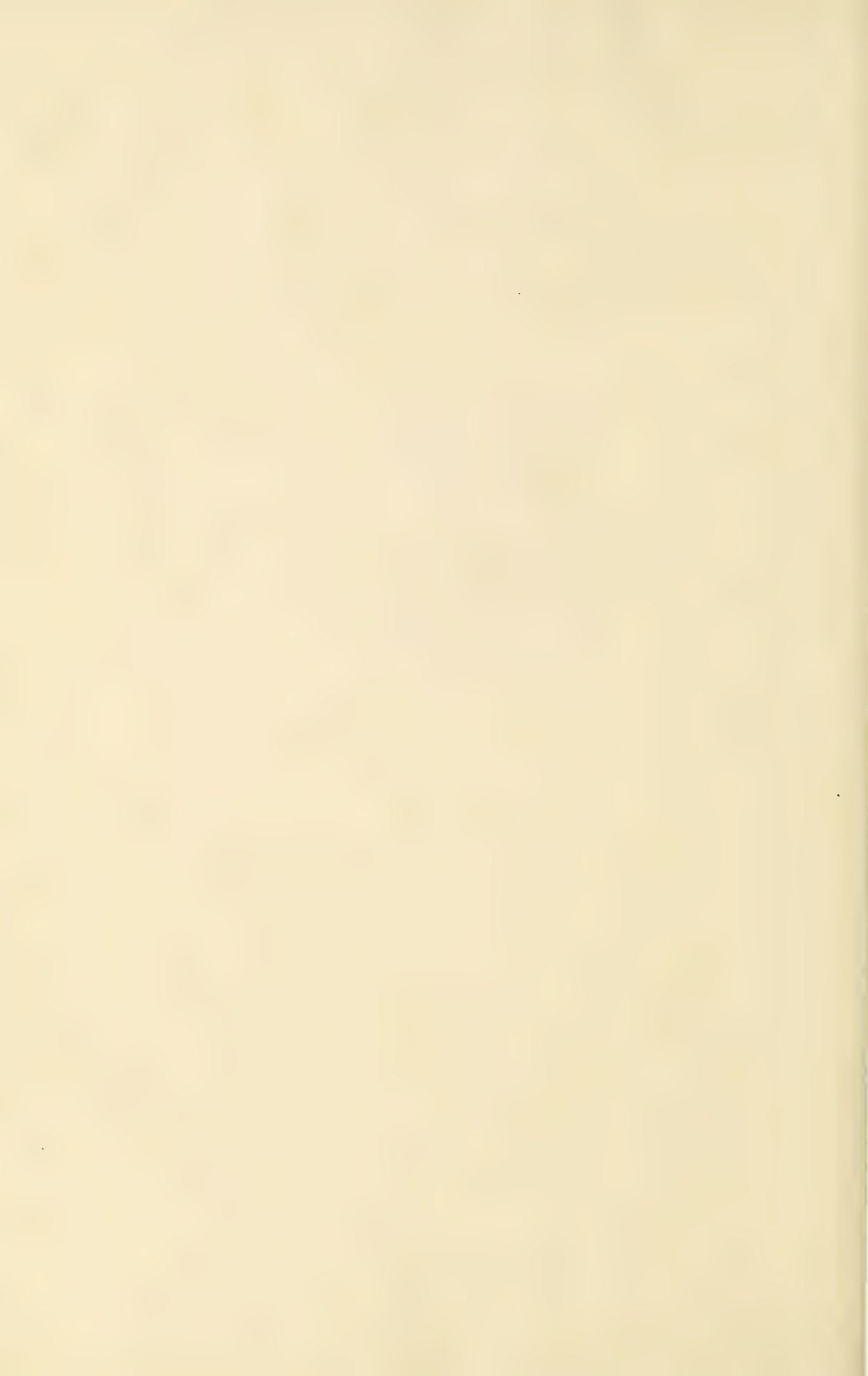
Men shold eke remembre hem of the shamethat is to come at the day off dometo hym that ben not penitent in this present lyf. for al the creaturis in heuene and in erthe and in hell shul see appertly al that they hyden in this world. Now for to speke off hem that ben so necligent and slowe to shryue hem. it stonteth in two maners. That one is that he hopeth to lyue longe & for to purchache moche

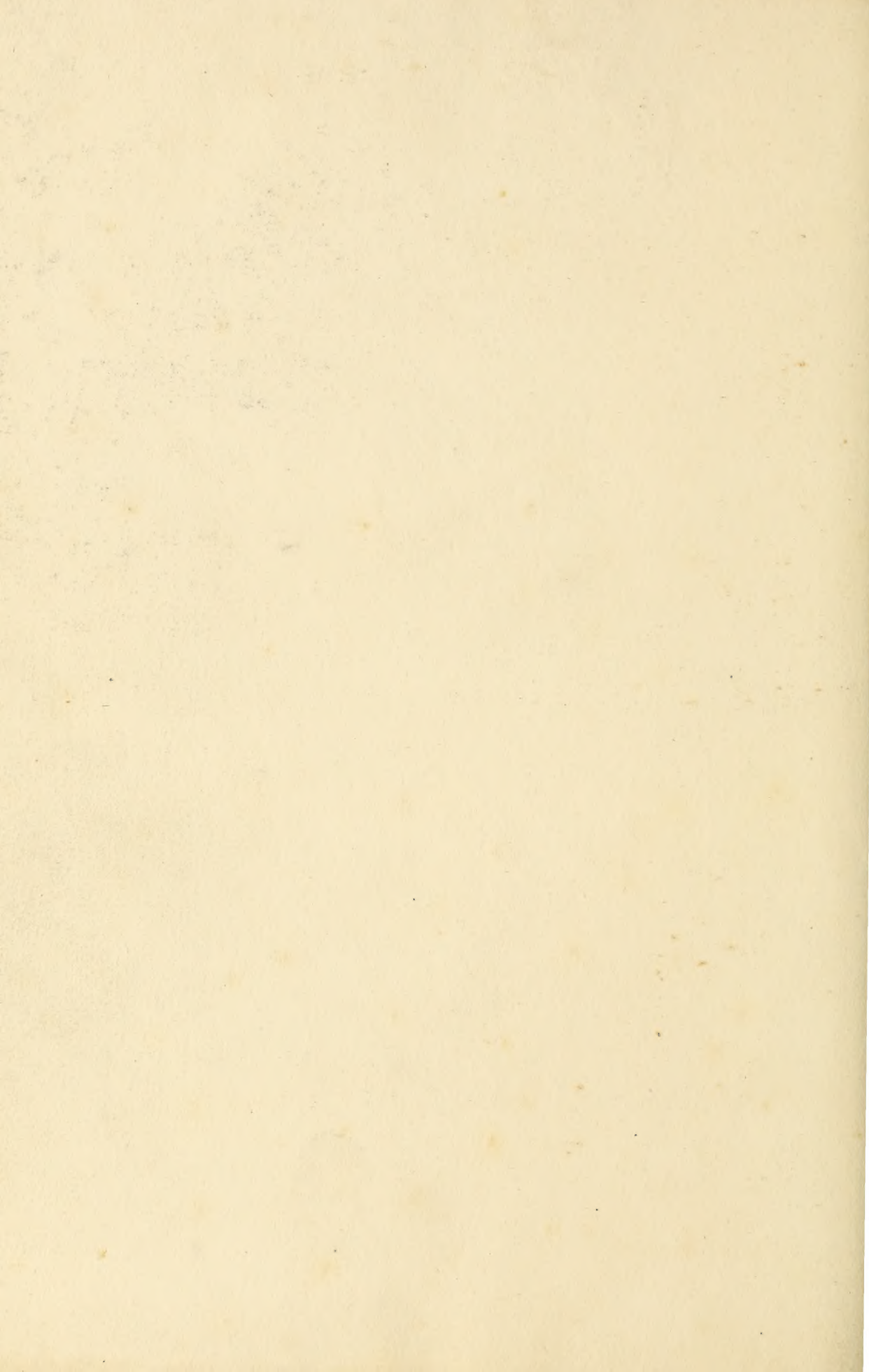
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reches for his delyste. And thenne wil he shewue hym as he sayth. he may as hym semeth tynely ynow come to shifte Another is the surquydrpe that he hath in Crystes mercy. And ayenst the first he shal thynke þoure lyp is in no spkerues. And eke that alle the riches of the world is in aucture and passyng as a shadowe on a wal. As sayth saynt Gregore that it apperteyneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god. that neuer shal the peyne stynte of them þe neuer wold with drawe hem fro synne her thankyes but euer cōtynued in synne. For that perpetuel wyl to do synne that. they haue perpetuel peyne. wanhope is in two maners. The first wanhope is in the mercy of god. That other is that they thinke that they may not longe perseuere in goodnes. The first wanhope comyth of that he demeth that he hath synned so greteþ so ofte. and so longe leyn in synne þe he shal not be sauyd Certes ayenst that cursyd wanhope he shold thynke that the passyon of Ihesu Cryst is more stronge to vnbynde than synne is to bynde. And ayenst the seconde wanhope he shal thynke þe as ofte as he sayleth. he shal arysen by penytence And though he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne The mercy of Cryst is alway redy to receyue hym to mercy Ayenst that wanhope that he shold not longe perseuere in goodnes he shal thynke that the febylnes of the deuyll may no thynge doo but

men wol suffre hym. And eke he shal haue strengthe of god and of alle hys chirche and of the protection of aungels yf hym lyst. Thenne shul men vnderstonde what is the fruyt of penaunce. and after the word of Ihu crist It is endeles blysse of heuene There ioye hath no contraryosyte of woone greuaunce there alle harmys be past of this present lyp there as is spkerues fro the peynes of helle. there as is the blessyd compaigne that reioysen euermore eueriche of ioyes Joye there as the body of mā that whylom wds foul and derke is more clere than the sonne. there as whylom the body was seke and freel. febel and mortal. As immortal and soo stronge and soo hool that ther may nothynge enpayre it. there as nether is hunger ne thrist ne colde. but euery soule repleynesshyd wyth the syght of the parasyght knowyng of the trunpte. This blessyd regne may man purchace by pouert spyrtyuel and the gloire by lownesse. the plente of Joye by hunger and thrist. And the reste by trauayll. and the lyp by deth and mortyfycaciō of synne. To that lyp he vabrynge that bought vs wyth hys precyous blood ACHEN. .







9/4/23

a₁₋₂, I₁ and I₈ K₁₋₅ in
facsimile.

K₆ a blank, cut away

ad₃ of bb₆ a little defective

worn in places, particularly
at the commencement

Some ll. mended.

Otherwise perfect

from B. L. Veritch
Balbot

13. 1. 22.

